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TALKS LEGO C-3PO**

**CELEBRATING THE  
1989 BATMOBILE**

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JANUARY 2020

ISSUE 63

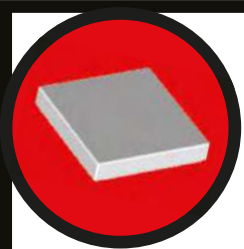
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# Blocks

ISSUE 63 / JANUARY 2020

## MEET THE TEAM



### DEPUTY EDITOR / GRAHAM HANCOCK

Long-term LEGO fan specialising in everything from Pirates to Star Wars, with a soft spot for exhibitions and LEGOLAND.



### ASSOCIATE EDITOR / CHRIS WHARFE

Experienced journalist with a lifelong love of LEGO, Star Wars and Super Heroes. Blocks' resident northerner.



### BUILD SPECIALIST / SIMON PICKARD

Our experienced MOC expert who is a regular on the show circuit. If there's a way to build it, then he can show you how.



### USA EDITOR / DANIEL KONSTANSKI

Lifelong LEGO obsessive passionate about collecting. With a thorough knowledge of LEGO over the years, he is Blocks' historian.

## CONTRIBUTORS

Katy Ward, Alec Hole, Daniel Jamieson, Rob Damiano, Ed Mack, David Wardle, Will Freeman, Jme Wheeler, Chris Wight, James Ward, Mike Freeman, Nathaniel Shields, Josh Cirinna, Rob Cirinna, Steve Guinness, Steve Paris, Kat Rees-Jauke, David Cartlidge, Phil Wrighton, Sébastien Daniell, Mike Mitchell, Jeremy Beckett

## ART EDITOR

Keith Wood, Hype Creative

## PHOTOGRAPHY

Phil Wrighton

## PRODUCTION

Chris Wharfe, Graham Hancock

## PUBLISHER

Tom Saunders  
tom@silverbackpublishing.rocks  
TEL: 07841 412199

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# WELCOME



Cover Pic: Phil Wrighton

**B**Y ANY MEASURE, The Rise of Skywalker's debut in cinemas is a milestone. Yes, some of you have been here before: first in 1983, then again in 2005, each time supposedly marking the end of the Skywalker Saga. But this is apparently really actually it this time. And what better way to mark the occasion than by sitting down with the man who's been there through it all?

Anthony Daniels has now filled C-3PO's golden shoes for 10 Star Wars movies, one LEGO movie, and countless small-screen adventures. From page 30, we chat to the man behind one of the saga's most enduring characters, while recreating the protocol droid's exhaustive journey in LEGO bricks. As you might have gathered from our cover, we're also taking the first wave of Episode IX sets to task from page 44.

Elsewhere, we ring in the first issue of 2020 with exhaustive coverage of the new 1989 Batmobile in Month in LEGO, celebrate the thriving high street (no, really) from page 70, and stroll down memory lane with the Forestmen on page 94. Enjoy the issue, and if you're reading us for the first time (or the first time in a while), don't miss out on our great subscription offers on page 68.

Chris Wharfe  
Associate Editor

**WE'RE  
TAKING THE  
FIRST WAVE OF  
EPISODE IX  
SETS TO TASK**



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# Blocks

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SEE PAGE 64 FOR DETAILS....



# CONTENTS

ISSUE 63 / JANUARY 2020



## REGULARS

### 6 LEGOTALK

A re-review of Iron Man's wardrobe, and your thoughts on the 1989 Batmobile.

### 8 COVER 30 YEARS OF THE BATMOBILE

The latest DC Super Heroes set aims straight for the nostalgia crowd, and it's a beauty.

### 11 LEGO ORIGINALS

Ever wanted an oversized wooden minifigure to call your very own? We're not judging.

### 12 THE YEAR OF THE RAT

Chinese New Year is a new staple in the LEGO calendar, now available worldwide.

### 14 THE BLOCKS CONVERSATION

Kale Frost talks up stud-shooter triggers and shows off his enormous Xmas build.

### 18 TOP TEN

The new Batmobile is stunning, but where does it rank against the rest?

### 20 Q&A

LEGO Senior Designer Rok Žgalin Kobe chats all things Architecture, from scales to skylines.

### 86 IDEAS SHOWCASE

Mary Poppins gets the LEGO treatment in Guillaume's impressive Ideas project.

### 88 MONTH IN MOCS

Patrick Massey goes into detail on his incredible castle build.

### 110 REBUILD CHALLENGE

Chris gets stuck into some building. The results are... well, see for yourself.







## FEATURES

### 30 COVER THE LIFE OF C-3PO

As Episode IX arrives in cinemas, we chat to Anthony Daniels about his storied career.

### 56 COVER TESTING THE LIEBHERR

How well does the new 42100 Liebherr R 9800 hold up in the real world?

### 62 BUILDING BLOCKS

The 1980s saw the LEGO Group go from strength to strength with Kirk Kjeld at the helm.

### 70 COVER MAKING A LEGO LIVING

The high street is alive and well – at least where independent LEGO shops are concerned.

### 94 BLOCKSTALGIA

We journey back through time to remember a much-loved Classic Castle subtheme.

## REVIEWS

### 40 IMPERIAL STAR DESTROYER

The third-largest Star Wars set of all time looms into view. Is it worth the dosh?

### 44 COVER RESISTANCE A-WING

Another Star Wars A-wing. Been there, done that. But you might still want this one.

### 48 COVER KYLO REN'S SHUTTLE

Like Ben Solo (maybe?!), the LEGO Group gets a shot at redemption with this updated shuttle.

### 50 COVER MILLENNIUM FALCON

If you somehow don't own a LEGO Millennium Falcon by now, the wait has paid off.

### 52 DROID COMMANDER

Set your droids a-rollin' with this BOOST-powered Star Wars trio.

### 54 COVER LIEBHERR R 9800 EXCAVATOR

£399 is a lot of money, but if you have it to spare, the Liebherr won't let you down.

## TECHNIQUE

### 78 PIECING TOGETHER PILLARS

Simon introduces us to multiple ways of constructing pillars big and small.

### 84 PIECE PERCEPTION

This microphone may look like it's just doing its job, but it's also concealing another purpose.

# LEGOtalk



Rounding up the brick conversation each month. E-mail [graham@blocksmag.com](mailto:graham@blocksmag.com) to share your views

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## STAR LETTER

**HI BLOCKS!** I received 76125 Iron Man Hall of Armour for my birthday and decided I would share my review with you.

Let's start with the build. The hall itself is modular and thus can be configured in hundreds of ways. There are also two separate builds that can be joined using Technic pins. One is a multi-screen computer with desk and coffee cup (because even superheroes need a break) and of course, no hall of armour would be complete without the iconic platform where Tony Stark transforms into Iron Man – and yes, it spins.

On to the six minifigures. Three of them are exclusive to this set. There are two Outriders (for those of us that are army builders, and I certainly am). The highlights of this set are the Iron Man MK 1, Iron Man MK 5, Iron Man MK 41 and Iron Man MK 50 suits. The MK 1 suit features amazingly detailed printing, while the MK 50 suit is amazing – it is the best suit in my collection.



Finn's a big fan of Iron Man's wardrobe.

Unfortunately, Igor is the worst part of the set in my opinion, but there are ways to build a replacement version using only the parts that come in the set. In total I give the set 94 out of 100.

**Finn**

*Thanks for sharing your thoughts Finn, we are glad you enjoyed this set so much! This month you can read the Blocks verdicts on the new sets for Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker – Graham*

## INSTAGRAM SPOTLIGHT



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# READER REACTIONS

We round up your thoughts on the LEGO Group's latest Batmobile. 30 years on, does it still hold the allure it once did?

'I'm getting anxiety about them going out of stock on day one before I've even ordered it! Let me place my order now! Pleeaaaaaaase!' – Dave Novis

'This looks amazing, but I have to hold out for the one from The Animated Series.' – Bryan Freehan



■ ■ THE ONLY  
BATMOBILE! ■ ■  
JAMIE HOGGARTH



'My second favourite Batmobile. I'd love to see a set for the '66 Batmobile.' – Michael Furtaw

'Not the Batmobile I deserved but the one I need right now.' – Mark Potter

'I think I have found my Christmas present' – Matthew Gibbs

■ ■ GOING TO HAVE TO  
SELL BODY PARTS THEN.  
CAN'T MISS THIS! ■ ■

MICHAEL HODGSON

## BUILD SPOTLIGHT



Sikorsky S-70 Firehawk L.A. County Fire Edition by Adrien Pecquet

# 30 YEARS OF THE BATMOBILE

Where does he get those wonderful toys?  
Straight from Billund, apparently



**WHAT'S BIG, BLACK**, has four wheels, and puts fear into the hearts of Gotham's most notorious criminals? Okay, so we're not going to put the Riddler out of a job anytime soon, but it's hard to skirt around the truth of what the LEGO Group's latest direct-to-consumer set is: an enormous and incredible recreation of the Batmobile, pulled straight from Tim Burton's 1989 adaptation of DC Comics' most iconic character.

In fact, if not for the few visible studs that litter 76139 1989 Batmobile's surface, we might have believed that this was a die-cast model. There's clearly been a lot of love poured into its design, with

brand new elements developed for the wrap-around windshield – which fronts a slide-open cockpit – and Michael Keaton's cowl-and-cape combo, for one of the coolest Batman minifigures we've ever seen.

The LEGO Group also hasn't shied away from giving this rendition of Bats' ride the price point it deserves. Your brick budget won't take a huge hit, given the 3,306-piece set weighs in at just £219.99 (or \$249.99/€249.99 in the US and Europe). In fact, the bigger hit will come to your display space, because this mammoth model measures in at 60cm long, 22cm wide and 12cm high.

It's going to look seriously good on your shelf, though, with a rotating display stand for the car, and a brick-built display stand for the





minifigures. Alongside Batman himself, the definitely-not-minifigure-scale car (despite the official press release comically suggesting you place the Dark Knight in the cockpit) includes Jack Nicholson's Joker and Kim Basinger's Vicki Vale.

You don't need to have graduated from Oxford, Harvard or Melbourne (hello, international readers!) to figure out that the Batmobile's release at the tail end of 2019 is significant. It's been exactly three decades since the director of such greats as *The Nightmare Before Christmas*, *Beetlejuice* and, erm, *Planet of the Apes* unleashed the dark, brooding reimagining of the Caped Crusader on to cinema screens worldwide.

That's not the only anniversary that 2019 marks – it's also been 80 years since the Dark Knight debuted in his own comic. 76139 is a milestone release for all the right reasons, and already looks worthy of the attention we're paying it this issue. Come back next month for our full verdict on this impressive interpretation of one of cinema's most iconic vehicles.

**76139 1989 Batmobile is available now.**

## HOT TOPIC

Blocks staffers debate the big bulletins

**This month:** *is the new wooden minifigure worth buying?*



**Graham Hancock**

■ ■ IT'S A WAY FOR FANS TO DISPLAY THEIR PASSION WITH PRIDE ■ ■

It has taken the LEGO Group far too long to explore the company's heritage, and a wooden item is the perfect way to do that. This new piece fits in well with the LEGO Originals prints, which also delve into the Billund archives for inspiration. Fans have waited a long time for classic LEGO iconography to be used in this way. The wooden material is one thing that makes the product special, but the choice of a minifigure is relevant too. Something about the blocky character being oversized works, and while that may have been done before in plastic, it has never been done in such a stylish way. This wooden minifigure is a way for fans to display their passion with pride, to the point that even those with only a passing interest in the brick will find it hard not to be tempted by this icon of childhood.

**Daniel Konstanski**

■ ■ MY MONEY COULD BE SPENT MUCH BETTER ELSEWHERE ■ ■

The wooden minifigure is lame. What exactly am I supposed to do with this? About the same size as a LEGO clock, it's too small to be a display piece of any merit, and while I understand the reason for the plastic hands, they just look strange. Apparently, the intent is that I decorate it myself; I completely lack the skills to do that. Anything I tried would completely deface this expensive bit of craftsmanship beyond recognition. This would be destined to sit as a glorified paperweight collecting dust on my desk at home. Considering that, for the same price, I could be 80% of the way to a modular building, or all the way to any but the largest of Star Wars sets, it seems my money could be spent much better elsewhere. I would love to own a wooden LEGO product, but one from the 1940s – not this.

**Chris Wharfe**

■ ■ A THREE-FIGURE PRICE TAG IS COMPLETELY UNREASONABLE ■ ■

What do you get the AFOL who has everything? An oversized wooden minifigure, apparently. Unfortunately, at its current cost, it's hard to imagine anyone choosing this over actual LEGO bricks. £30 is an easy ask. £50 is just about justifiable. A three-figure price tag, on the other hand, is completely unreasonable, especially given it's only five times the size of a minifigure – the images make it look pretty large, but you might end up finding yourself disappointed by its diminutive size. It's a shame, because even with its jarring plastic hands, this is a really cool figure that would make for a wonderfully understated display piece, whether at home or in your office. Its blank canvas, meanwhile, is an open invite to unleash your creativity – but heavily dependent on how much you trust your own artistic skill. I'll leave the painting supplies where they are.



Will you be decorating a wooden minifigure?



The box is a classy affair.





## ■ MINIFIGURE OF THE MONTH // BATMAN

The Bat-takeover of this issue's Month in LEGO section wouldn't be complete without spotlighting the Dark Knight himself. 76139 1989 Batmobile's Batman is a thing of real beauty, if not playability, with its moulded cowl and cape element faithfully recreating the bold '80s design.

## ■ RUMOUR MILL // WHITE BASEPLATE

It's been 12 years since we last saw a 32x32 white baseplate in an official product, and even then you had to buy a LEGO Racers set to get it. Fortunately for budding Hoth battle builders, the mythical plate is reportedly returning to stores as a standalone product.

## FIVE THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT...

# LEGO ORIGINALS

The LEGO Group is diversifying its portfolio with a nod to the past

### 1. IT'S ALL ABOUT NOSTALGIA AND BRAND HERITAGE.

The first product to launch under the LEGO Originals umbrella is 853967 Wooden Minifigure, and it's a sure sign of things to come for the theme. If you've been keeping up with our Building Blocks series, you'll know that the very first LEGO toys were hand-crafted from wood by Ole Kirk Kristiansen in the early 1930s. In the middle of the 20th century, the company turned its attention to plastic, and the rest is history.

### 2. IT'S THE BRAINCHILD OF ROOM COPENHAGEN.

You might recognise Danish design company Room Copenhagen from its other licensed LEGO products, which include (but aren't limited to) storage bricks, wall hangers, ice cube trays and lunchboxes. Now, it's teamed up with the LEGO Group for what the companies are calling an extension of the LEGO play experience.

### 3. THE WOODEN MINIFIGURE IS DESIGNED TO BE DECORATED.

You'll notice that the 5:1 upscaled minifigure, which stands at 20cm tall and 11cm wide, is completely blank. The LEGO Group is hoping that fans will buy the minifigure and decorate it to their preference, rather than creating a wooden version of a single minifigure (and therefore narrowing its audience). This does rely heavily, though, on your own artistic talent.

### 4. NOT EVERY PART OF THE WOODEN MINIFIGURE IS WOODEN.

Wondering why the hands are yellow? That's because they're plastic, and the only articulated part of the figure, so as to grasp any brick-built accessories you see fit to construct for your new wooden pal. A polybag with 29 bricks is included in the box to get you started, along with instructions for five different models. Even when it's creating a product designed solely for display, the LEGO Group just couldn't let go of the need for playability.

### 5. IT'S A MILESTONE PRODUCT FOR THE LEGO GROUP.

The last LEGO product to combine both plastic and wood in a single release was 1130 Bedford Firetruck, which launched a mighty six decades ago in 1959. That makes this collectors' piece rather special, and it carries a collectors' price tag to match. You can get your hands on the Wooden Minifigure right now – if you're prepared to part with an eye-watering £109.99 for the statuesque display piece.



## NEWS IN BRIEF

### ■ CERTIFIED TRIO

It's all change in the LEGO Certified Professionals program, as a new member from Canada has joined the Entry stage, while members from China and Hungary have graduated to the full LCP program. Certified Professionals are recognised brick-builders, licensed by the LEGO Group to carry out build projects.

### ■ FIT FOR A PRINCESS

The line-up of official LEGO magazines is getting a new title in 2020, with LEGO Disney Princess joining the likes of LEGO Batman, LEGO Star Wars and LEGO CITY on supermarket and newsagent shelves. If it follows precedent, the new mag should offer a cheap way to get your hands on mini-dolls.

### ■ AWARDS SEASON

The Toy Retailers Association has named 75957 The Knight Bus as one of its top 12 toys for Christmas 2019, while five LEGO sets have earned nominations in the 2020 Toy of the Year awards – including 75810 The Upside Down for Specialty Toy of the Year, and 75253 Droid Commander for STEM/STEAM Toy of the Year.

### ■ SECOND ONE TO LEGO

Country music star Chris Stapleton has collaborated with the LEGO Group for his latest music video. The clip, for his new single Second One To Know, features minifigure versions of the band battling with LEGO ninjas and dragons.

# THE YEAR OF THE RAT

The LEGO Group is doubling down on its Chinese New Year celebrations for 2020

80105 Temple Fair will be available worldwide from January.



**THE LEGO GROUP** stoked controversy at the beginning of 2019 with the announcement of three Chinese New Year sets – not because the subject is remotely taboo, but because the sets were glorious, and they were only to be released in the Asia-Pacific market. Uproar from LEGO fans around the world led to an announcement in April that going forward, region-exclusive sets would eventually be released worldwide.

Now, the company is making good on that promise with its 2020 Chinese New Year sets, 80104 Lion Dance and 80105 Temple Fair, which will launch in Asia-Pacific markets

on December 26, and globally on January 10. Both sets are representative of the kind of attention the LEGO Group is paying its biggest growth market, because on paper, they look incredible.

Lion Dance includes a percussionists' stage, a traditional Chinese temple gate, and five

**WE WERE INCREDIBLY THOROUGH WITH OUR RESEARCH WHEN DESIGNING THE SETS**

research when designing the sets,' said their designer, Markus Rollbühler. 'For the Chinese New Year Temple Fair, we looked closely at the types of things vendors sell in the market stalls and all of the various goods on offer.' The focus for Markus wasn't just on authenticity, but playability. 'Both sets include amazing minifigures and details to encourage role play. The Lion Dance set comes with many interesting play features. For example, you can fully pose the lions and you can also open and close their mouths to help recreate the spectacular dances we all know and love.'



wonderfully detailed lion figures, while Temple Fair recreates a sprawling scene common to Chinese society around the lunar new year. The temple, market stalls and cherry blossom trees are populated with 13 minifigures and a baby, making for an expansive – and colourful – display.

'We were incredibly thorough with our





### ► BLOCKS PITCHES // '66 BATMOBILE

The 1989 Batmobile is all well and good (by which we mean, it is well good), but it's only got us hankering for more Bat-goodness. While we'd love a standalone release of the minifigure-scale 1966 Batmobile, we'd love a super-sized version even more – especially if it came with a brick-built Adam West figure to drive it.



### ► RUMOUR MILL // OLD TRAFFORD

The LEGO GROUP has put ink to paper on a contract with Manchester United, although there's no word on the signing fee – or even contract duration – for the club's new star player. Rumour has it, though, that the deal will see the release of a Creator Expert-style Old Trafford stadium.

## THE BIG QUESTIONS

# BUILDING A NEW HQ

The new LEGO campus has opened its doors. You have questions, we have answers

### What is this, some kind of LEGO university?

No, don't let the term 'campus' fool you – it's really just a new workspace designed to house Billund's 2,000 LEGO employees. It's been in the works for four years, and its first phase officially opened at the end of October. Five hundred employees have already moved into the new building, with the other 1,500 due to move across by the end of 2021.

### So why is it called a 'campus'?

Aside from its hip Silicon Valley-esque branding, the new building is more than just a workspace. As well as traditional office areas, the campus includes lounges, play areas and outdoor parks, all of which are open to the public. Once it's finished in 2021, the campus's central area – called 'People House' – will incorporate a fitness centre, arts and crafts workshop, café, auditorium, and even accommodation for visiting employees.

### Is that a huge LEGO brick on the roof?

It is indeed – the campus's designers, C.F. Møller Architects, have imbued the structure with LEGO from top to bottom. There are LEGO bricks in the walls and entryway, and the entire 54,000-square foot space will eventually have not one, but two enormous yellow bricks on the buildings' roofs.

### So the employees will be working for LEGO, in LEGO?

Basically, yes. The aim with the new campus was to mirror the design language and ethos of the LEGO Group, with the architects given permission to adopt a 'playful' approach to their designs. 'The team has worked hard to create a workspace that reflects our values and instils a sense of fun,' said CEO Niels B. Christiansen. 'Our mission is to inspire children, so it's important we provide our talented colleagues with an environment that is playful and inspires creativity and innovative thinking.'

### How does building an enormous new campus square with the LEGO Group's planet promise?

Good question, concerned citizen. Half of the campus's energy is being supplied by more than 4,000 solar panels, which cover the roof of its parking garage. The buildings' roofs, meanwhile, are home to Sedum plants, which absorb water – and will be used to irrigate the campus's green spaces. And the building interiors have been constructed using a special 'gypsum fibre board material', which apparently requires 22 fewer tonnes of steel due to its strength, saving 650 tonnes of CO2 emissions. There's no word on whether the company will be offsetting the rest of the energy required, though.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### ■ A BAD INVESTMENT

The LEGO Group family owners' private holding and investment company lost \$150 million in a single day in November, after one of its key investments backfired. A profit warning issued by Danish office-service firm ISS A/S wiped 20% off the company's market value – bad news for KIRKBI A/S, which owns around 15% of ISS.

### ■ BUILDING SHANGHAI

Merlin Entertainments has announced a second LEGOLAND park for China, just weeks after announcing the first in Sichuan. LEGOLAND Shanghai will open sometime after 2023, as Merlin – much like the LEGO Group – prioritises aggressive growth in the region.

### ■ LEGO BATTLEFRONT

Keen videogame fans have mashed up their favourite LEGO Star Wars characters with Star Wars: Battlefront II. The modding community has added delightfully plastic Yoda and Battle Droid skins to the shooter, along with LEGO Star Wars: The Complete Saga character icons.

### ■ BRICK MACY'S

The LEGO Group debuted a new Brick Changer float at this year's Macy's Thanksgiving Parade in New York City. The float depicts an enormous part-turkey, part-dragon painting a monochrome, brick-built canvas with bright LEGO colours, signifying the creativity behind the company.

The campus's designers have imbued the structure with LEGO from top to bottom.





# THE Blocks CONVERSATION

We shoot the brick breeze with prominent AFOLs. This month, prolific builder and LEGO MASTERS Australia contestant **Kale Frost** talks Classic Space, funding LEGO through LEGO and a very special Xmas build

## What's the most versatile LEGO element you own?

Speaking as a builder and creator, not a collector, that's a loaded question. All LEGO is versatile. Seeing it as such is part of the key to being a great creator. Not just seeing a part as what it was originally for, but having something you wish to build and using whatever the best part for the job might be. It's about seeing possibility. And as an example, I might be the only person to have ever ordered stud-shooter triggers in bulk, because they make beautiful greebling and architectural details.

## If you could resurrect one theme, what would it be?

Classic Space. Very specifically, as Neo-Classic Space. The LEGO Group has struggled with creating its own IP over recent years, and had

difficulty making a lasting space theme, partly because of the juggernaut that is the Star Wars licence (which I love, make no mistake). But I think the love is there for a Neo-Classic Space theme because it's an existing IP that

**IT WAS SO HUMBLING TO SEE PEOPLE RESPOND TO MY WORK THAT WAY**

has amazing potential. Use Benny as the entry character, and really tap into that idea of exploration, adventure and hope. Not good vs. evil, but the sense of play and wonder we all have from childhood. It's what a lot of AFOLs, and the parents buying for their own

children, grew up with.

## What's your 'one that got away'?

I would have said the Ghostbusters HQ. I actually built a mini version of it because I couldn't afford the real one. Then I put up a 'How to build' video for it on YouTube, which got 400,000 views, and led to me being sent a cheque from them that allowed me to buy the real thing. Which was just so awesome, and so humbling to see people respond to my work that way.

## What are you building right now?

I just wrapped up a big one (no spoilers about the next one): a scene showing a life-size Santa with minifigure elves coming to life and creating Christmas around him. It'll be on display in Adelaide's Rundle Mall until 2020,

Kale's latest build is this impressive and enormous Christmas display in Adelaide.







#### ► ACCESSORY CORNER // FROZEN II KEYRINGS

It's been a while since the LEGO Group introduced any new keyrings, so if you're looking to add a little newness to your keys, Anna, Elsa and Olaf could be just the ticket. The mini-dolls and, erm, whatever Olaf is are available now for £3.99 apiece.

#### ■ RUMOUR MILL // POSING PIECES

By the time you read this, you might have already seen 2020's line-up of DC Super Heroes sets – but if not, there's a rumour floating around that they're going to include transparent elements to pose your minifigures.

## CRUNCHING THE NUMBERS

We fire up the Bat-computer to do the Bat-maths behind the Caped Crusader's car collection

**28 3306 2013 8 45 £239.99**

The total number of LEGO Batmobiles across System, DUPLO, retail sets and polybags

The number of pieces in the largest Batmobile to date, 76139 1989 Batmobile

The only year since the launch of DC Super Heroes that hasn't seen a new Batmobile

The number of DC TV series and movies that have directly inspired LEGO Batmobiles

The number of pieces in the smallest System Batmobile, the polybag 30161 Batmobile

The price of the most expensive set to include a Batmobile, 76052 Batman Classic TV Series – Batcave

used over 150,000 bricks, and was just an amazing project to work on. I'm very happy with how it's turned out.

#### What's the most recent set you bought? What did you think of it?

I suppose I should use that question to give a quick plug to my YouTube channel – [www.youtube.com/frostbricks](http://www.youtube.com/frostbricks) – where I review sets and share building tips. I buy a lot of sets, usually just for the parts inside and/or minifigures, but it's very rare

that I build them 'out of the box'. As a creator I look for different things in a set, and often that's how to improve upon them.

#### What's top of your to-buy list?

I'm a huge geek, and the 1989 Batmobile has a special place in my heart. Yeah, you know where this is going right? And just in time for Christmas too!

#### What's your ultimate dream build/MOC?

Again with 'no spoilers' – there's a world record

## I MIGHT BE THE ONLY PERSON TO HAVE EVER ORDERED STUD-SHOOTER TRIGGERS IN BULK

attempt I've had my eye on, perhaps it's time to make it reality? I'm always building something, and you can find my latest builds by following me on Instagram at Frostbricks, or on my website at [www.frostbricks.com](http://www.frostbricks.com).



Kale's mini Ghostbusters HQ funded the real thing.



## NEWS IN BRIEF

### ■ STILL HIDDEN

The first wave of Hidden Side sets for 2020 has been revealed, with six new models set to debut in the augmented reality theme in January – including a lighthouse, beach buggy, airplane, subway station and fairground.

### ■ STORE SPRINGS ETERNAL

Two new LEGO Stores have opened doors for the first time in Birmingham and Amsterdam. Blocks was in attendance for Birmingham's opening weekend – come back next issue for a closer look inside the store, which has promised a couple of firsts for the official LEGO shopping experience.

### ■ STOCK TAKE

LEGO.com now has an inventory checker in the UK and US, so you can find out if a set is in stock at your local LEGO Store before heading there. At the moment, it doesn't offer a specific number, but hopefully that feature will be added to the tool eventually.

### ■ MINILAND NO MORE

Merlin Entertainments is pulling the LEGO Star Wars Miniland display out of all its LEGOLAND parks on January 6, including California, Billund, Windsor and Malaysia. There's no confirmation on what will replace the displays, but their removal may have something to do with Disney wanting exclusivity over Star Wars attractions in theme parks.

# SHIFTING INTO GEAR

The LEGO Group has partnered with the BBC for its latest Technic set. We've got the lowdown



**WHEN THE LEGO** Group announced a partnership with Top Gear in September, it's easy to see why the community response was a collective 'huh?' It was obvious we weren't going to get minifigures of current presenters Paddy McGuinness, Andrew Flintoff, Chris Harris and Sabine Schmitz, let alone its most famous trio of Clarkson, Hammond and May. But what else would be the point of a collaboration with the show, given it's only concerned with cars the LEGO Group could license separately? Well, we'll tell you.

## IT'S ACTUALLY A TECHNIC SET.

Cast all thoughts of minifigures aside, because 42109 App-Controlled Top Gear Rally Car joins an ever-growing line of licensed Technic sets. Its moniker doesn't exactly roll off the tongue, but the LEGO Group is hoping it will roll straight off shelves when it launches on December 26. At 463 pieces for £124.99 (or \$129.00), though, it looks like the Top Gear tax is giving Disney a run for its money, even with a large motor, an XL motor, and a Bluetooth-controlled smart hub in the box.

## THIS IS THE THIRD CONTROL+ MODEL.

Following in the tracks (and wheels) of 42099 4x4 X-Treme Off-Roader and 42100 Liebherr R

9800, the Top Gear Rally Car will be operable through the LEGO Group's latest remote tech, CONTROL+. That means you'll need to download an app to your smartphone to get it working, but the trade-off is much greater control over every single facet of the set, along with programmable commands akin to

BOOST.

## IT'S PACKED WITH FUNCTIONS.

Once you've downloaded the CONTROL+ app, which is currently available on iOS and Android, the rally car will offer accelerate, reverse, gyro control, and multi-touch control







#### ► RUMOUR MILL // SPIDER-MAN NOIR

The LEGO Group's journey into the Spider-verse looks set to continue in 2020, with a fedora-sporting Spider-Man Noir minifigure rumoured to be part of an upcoming wave. The LEGO design is a clear nod to Nic Cage's interpretation of the character in 2018's hit animated movie.

#### ► KEY QUOTE // WILL ARNETT

'It gives me piece of mind to be able to continue building my relationship with The LEGO Group. Ultimately, my goal is Danish citizenship.' *The voice of LEGO Batman relishes his announcement as the host of LEGO MASTERS USA.*

### EYE ON EXCLUSIVES

## 40433 1989 Batmobile

Is one 1989 Batmobile somehow not quite enough to scratch your Bat-nostalgia cravings, even when said Batmobile is a 3,306-piece beast? Then you might want to head to your secondary marketplace of choice for 40433 1989 Batmobile, a LEGO.com/LEGO Store-exclusive gift-with-purchase that was available to early investors in its bigger brother, 76139 1989 Batmobile.

While the smaller model's piece count wasn't confirmed at the time of writing, it looks to be roughly minifigure scale, comprised of at least a few hundred parts. You'll have to add your own Batman minifigure behind the wheel, but if you're investing in this particular set, then chances are you have at least one of those already, if not your own Bat-army.

If anything, it's a shame such a stunning model was readily available to so few – we'd have loved to have seen this as a regular retail release. Instead, you'll have to rely on aftermarket sellers if you didn't spring for the latest direct-to-consumer DC Super Heroes set in its first few days on sale. Whatever price the market sets for it, though, it will very likely be worth splashing the cash for serious Bat-fans.



functions. You'll also find plenty of challenges and achievements to complete and unlock in the app, along with 'inspirational videos'. We're not sure

'It's the result of several months of hard work from the LEGO and BBC Studios teams, and we can't wait to see it on the shelves soon.'

## IT LOOKS LIKE THE TOP GEAR TAX IS GIVING DISNEY A RUN FOR ITS MONEY

what that means exactly, but it probably won't be a motivational talk from Paddy McGuinness. Alas.

### IT WAS CO-DESIGNED BY THE LEGO GROUP AND BBC TOP GEAR.

Back and forth between the LEGO Group and its partners is nothing new, but it's not often that said partner has a direct hand in a model's design. 'It's exciting to have collaborated with LEGO Technic on this and it's a very natural fit for the Top Gear brand,' said Jason Easy, Head of Licensing UK, BBC Studios.



### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### ■ NEW FOR 2020

Just before we went to print, a slew of new sets were revealed for 2020, including (but not limited to): another Star Wars X-wing (snooze); a Creator monster truck/burger van combo (genius); a Friends baking competition (tasty); Polly Pocket-style Disney Princess boxes (different); a Trolls: World Tour dance party (garish); a mini version of the Technic CLAAS XERION (cute); and a CITY safari jeep (puma!). We'll have more comprehensive reviews for you in the issues to come.

#### ■ DISNEY MINUS

Disney's new streaming service, Disney+, has launched in the US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the Netherlands. The UK and Germany, meanwhile, will have to wait until at least March 31 to find out what happens in The Mandalorian. Fingers crossed no spoilery LEGO sets launch before then.

#### ■ CUT-PRICE MOSAIC

If you're keen to build a massive mosaic of your own face but are put off by the price of the LEGO Group's official method of doing so, consider popping over to Berlin. The German LEGO Store's Mosaic Maker, which first debuted in the flagship Leicester Square store in 2016, has had a price reduction from €119.99 to €99.99, which definitely warrants hopping on a flight. (Okay, maybe we'll just take any excuse for a holiday.)

# TOP TEN BATMOBILES

We bust into the Batcave to rank the best of Batman's LEGO rides over the past 13 years

Words: Chris Wharfe Pics: The LEGO Group



10

## 76045 KRYPTONITE INTERCEPTION

Zack Snyder's concept for the Batmobile was nothing if not unique, and certainly divided fans, but we loved its jagged, angular bodywork. The LEGO version captures it surprisingly well at this scale – although a couple of specially-moulded windscreen pieces help massively – even while its light grey front wheels look bizarrely out of place. Batman only works in black (and very, very, very dark grey), remember?



9

## 76012 BATMAN: THE RIDDLER CHASE

Inspired by the short-lived Beware the Batman TV series, this sharp, alternate take on the Batmobile is as underrated as its source material. The golden alloys and trans-orange windscreen inject some very welcome colour into its design – at odds with Bats' traditional dark colour scheme we just cited, admittedly, but the difference here is that the colours feel complementary to its cartoon style, particularly given the car's exaggerated chassis.

8

## 7784 THE BATMOBILE: ULTIMATE COLLECTORS' EDITION

This enormous, striking and original interpretation of the Dark Knight's wheels is fronted by a brick-built Bat-emblem, sports Bat-logo hubcaps, and has an aggressively low profile – making it one of the sleekest rides the Caped Crusader has ever been depicted as driving. Only he wasn't here, at least in LEGO form, because this 1,045-piece set dwarfed minifigure scale, and did so at the bargain price of just £49.99 back in 2006.



## 76119 BATMOBILE: PURSUIT OF THE JOKER

We've had plenty of minifigure-scale Batmobiles that share the Keaton-mobile as their main inspiration, right back to the original in 2006's 7781 The Batmobile: Two-Face's Escape – but it's this quintessential Batman set that's brought us one of the best versions yet. While it takes some cues from the 1989 cinematic version, it only does so insofar as 7784 did some 13 years ago, because 76119's Batmobile is actually most clearly based on the LEGO Group's own Ultimate Collectors' Edition.

7





6

MONTH IN LEGO

**70905 THE BATMOBILE**

The LEGO Batman Movie brought a slew of original Bat-designs to the table, and the Dark Knight's ride was no exception. The resultant ride is bursting with Bat-personality to match Will Arnett's outlandish take on the character: its height is completely adjustable thanks to individually controlled front and rear axles, the wheels can swing out 90 degrees, and stickers on the side gloriously present it as 'The Speedwagon'. Clearly, LEGO Cinematic Universe Bats is a big fan of Illinois rockers REO.

5

**76035 JOKERLAND**

Even if the wider set didn't live up to expectations, the real gem of Jokerland was its Batmobile. That's surprising given that prior to its 2015 release, we'd had myriad Batmobiles, and precisely one Joker-themed carnival in 2012's 6857 The Dynamic Duo Funhouse Escape. But the hit-and-miss play features and uninviting build on offer meant Jokerland's eponymous models faded into the background next to a seriously impressive motor for the Caped Crusader, which iterated on earlier versions, but added a huge jet engine to the front in a clear nod to Tim Burton's movies.



4

**76023 THE TUMBLER**

Christopher Nolan rewrote the Batman script altogether with his seminal Dark Knight trilogy – a sentiment that extended to the DC hero's arsenal of weapons and vehicles. The Tumbler is arguably more Bat-tank than Batmobile, but it was the perfect choice for the DC Super Heroes' theme's first scaled-up, direct-to-consumer vehicle in 2014. The car's unique, angular shape makes for an eclectic build experience, and a finished model that achieves surprising depth, despite being ostensibly a sheer mass of black elements.

3

**76052 BATMAN CLASSIC TV SERIES – BATCAVE**

The LEGO Group criminally closed off one of the most-wanted and most iconic Batmobiles behind a £240 paywall, but you did get an entire Batcave with it for that price. The retro set is an all-round incredible love letter to the Adam West-fronted 1960s Batman TV series, but the black-and-red Batmobile was always going to be the highlight. With enough room for both Batman and the boy wonder, the LEGO Group completely knocked it out of the park with this one. If you missed out on the full set, you owe it to your inner Bat-fan to at least piece together the car (and print your own stickers).



2

**70917 THE ULTIMATE BATMOBILE**

It's hard to argue with the 'ultimate' moniker: this is four Bat-vehicles in one, including a Batmobile, Bat-tank, Batwing and Batcycle. Only one of those sub-assemblies really qualifies for this list, but the combined ultimate Batmobile is more than the sum of its parts. Wheeling this monster around your living quarters really evokes the ridiculous premise of Bats' LEGO incarnation, embodying the phrase 'over-the-top' in a way that only The LEGO Batman Movie really could – at least when it comes to DC Comics' most iconic character.

1

**76139 1989 BATMOBILE**

It's only just hit shelves, but this astonishing recreation of one of Batman's most iconic rides has already claimed pole position in the LEGO Group's best Batmobiles – at least in our view. It's huge, it's detailed, it's wholly authentic, and it's no doubt going straight to the top of every discerning DC fan's wish list.

# ALL ABOUT ARCHITECTURE

We chat with Senior Designer Rok Žgalin Kobe about skylines, stories and scales in LEGO Architecture

**Words:** Chris Wharfe **Pics:** Chris Wharfe, The LEGO Group

**T**HERE AREN'T MANY LEGO themes that can claim to have been running for 13 years, but with the launch of 21051 Tokyo and 21052 Dubai in January, Architecture gleefully accepts that (very specific) crown. The brainchild of Adam Reed Tucker has come a long way since those first two Chicago-based models, 21000 Sears Tower and 21001 John Hancock Center, in 2008. We caught up with the current master of the theme, Rok Žgalin Kobe, to find out the reasons behind the theme's longevity, and what goes into creating a successful skyline.

**Blocks: Architecture is still going strong years after it was first introduced. Why do you think it's so well-loved?**

**Rok:** We provide the visual story to get you more immersed in the place, exploring it while you're building it. LEGO Architecture is not about play; it's a display model at the end of the day, but a lot of effort goes into making the building experience itself enjoyable and surprising – utilising new building techniques, interesting facts, linking the LEGO model to the existing building, and so forth. So you can see where the added value in Architecture lies.

**How do you communicate that story in sets that aren't just a single location or building?**

If you look at, let's say, the Vegas skyline – the skylines aren't just a collection of single buildings; we try to create a story and capture the feel of the city. Las Vegas is an oasis in the desert. You have the greenery and water and lights and entertainment coming out of the desert, as you would experience it coming through the road, driving past the 'Welcome to Las Vegas' sign, driving past the big hotels on the street, then arriving to Fremont Street and the old part of Vegas. So you've got a bit of storytelling there, and that goes for all the skylines to a bigger or lesser extent.

In Paris, you're travelling along the line of the Champs-Élysées, the beginning of the

Louvre, past the Grand Palais, you will see the Eiffel Tower and Tour Montparnasse to the left in the distance, then past the treeline the avenue to the Arc de Triomphe. So the locations of these buildings correspond to how they are in the city.

San Francisco layers views – if you stand on the shore, you would see the bridge in that way, so it's like a postcard view. If you stand on a different spot, you would see Alcatraz Island, and if you turn around you'd see the downtown with the layering of skyscrapers, the hills with the trams rolling up and down the hills, the 'painted ladies' by the side of

**THERE ARE MANY REQUIREMENTS THAT ONE MIGHT NOT THINK OF THAT GO INTO A LEGO SET**

the park. It's a layering of images, not only a collection of simple icons. But it's also about capturing the feel – you've got the waves hitting the shore, you've got the cable cars running up and down the street, so you've got the feel of the place as well.

**What's the selection process like for a skyline?**

There's quite a bit of exploration before we actually build anything. I have to first make sure that the main icons can be captured, and then decide on the composition, which icons to choose, what the size would be, to correspond to the price point. So there are quite a few factors that you're narrowing down during the process.

**How do you determine the scale for the skylines? Do you start with one building and then scale everything else to it?**

Yeah, or vice versa. Perhaps you find that one building cannot be scaled to the rest, and

then you start from there. You cannot let the model explode in size, so to speak, so you're limited by the biggest building there is in the skyline set. That one sets the scale in certain terms, then whether its LEGO representation can be done within that module or not. So the LEGO System itself plays a crucial limiting role in what can actually be done. But then you're trying to see how things work together. It's not a one-way process. You can hit serious road blocks in the middle, where you might want to start again or approach things from a different angle from time to time.

**How much freedom do you have to give more depth to the skylines?**

Since I'm setting the rules to begin with... I mean, there's not a set of rules that has been put in place, but I have the liberty to break them – where needed, of course. We're trying to make them so that they fit with one another, so that they're part of the same family, but where it makes sense – so that we don't have a two-dimensional presentation of the building – we can add depth or height. It's whatever works for the scene that we're trying to represent.

**What are some of the challenges that come at building in microscale?**

Even though you use some very small elements, the set at the end of the day still has to be stable, even though it's wafer thin. So there's quite a few considerations that you wouldn't normally think of. It mustn't present a stabbing danger during any step of the building process – god forbid a kid accidentally falls.

So there are many requirements that one might not think of that go into a LEGO set, especially with a theme like Star Wars. It has to be strong enough but fragile enough – just like the buildings themselves. They have to sway in earthquakes and the wind, but be stable enough to survive it. ■



LEGO Architecture  
Senior Designer  
Rok Žgalin Kobe.



Trafalgar Square's Nelson's  
Column knocks down easily,  
to prevent any stabbing  
danger.





# ConnLUG

Cam Panczak introduces us to a Connecticut-based LEGO User Group that prides itself on its inclusivity and event displays

**Words:** Chris Wharfe

**Pics:** ConnLUG, Cam Panczak

## Where is ConnLUG based?

We're based in Connecticut, but we have members from New Jersey, New York, and throughout New England.

## How many members are in the LUG?

There are 45 active members.

## Who is the ambassador?

Cam Panczak is the President and LEGO Ambassador.

## How and when was it formed?

ConnLUG was formed in 2011 under the former name LUGOCT (pronounced LUG 'o CT), and rebranded in 2014 as ConnLUG. It was started by Kevin Hinkle with only a handful of members who met at the South Windsor Public Library, and has grown into the organisation that it is today.

## How often do you meet?

Official monthly meetings are held on the third Saturday of every month, but members meet for informal gatherings each week, and also for public events and displays.

## What do your meetings involve?

Like many LUGs, ConnLUG meetings offer members the opportunity to receive news from the LAN, draft pre-chosen sets for parts, and participate in regular build challenges. What sets our meetings apart are our 'MOC-and-Tell' events, our set reviews, and our special events. Members are encouraged to participate in any and all events, where they have the opportunity to showcase their builds, review official sets, demonstrate building techniques for other members, or be part of one-of-a-kind build events and challenges.

## Are you involved with any local shows?

ConnLUG has a busy show schedule each year. In addition to large public events like



## WHAT IS A LEGO USER GROUP (LUG)?

- A group of AFOLs, recognised by the LEGO Group
- Non-profit, driven by volunteers
- A supportive environment of like-minded individuals
- Welcomes all ability levels
- Hosts regular meetings to discuss ideas, news and builds
- Organises and participates in public events and conventions
- Works with the LEGO Group through their appointed Ambassador

## ■ ■ ■ WE WERE ALL ALONE UNTIL WE REALISED THAT THERE ARE LOTS OF AFOLS AND TFOLS LIKE US ■ ■ ■

BrickFair, we are involved with many local events such as: Bing Comic-Con in Springfield, Massachusetts; community build events with the Middlebury Public Library in Middlebury, Connecticut; and most notably, the Festival of Trees and Traditions at the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford, Connecticut, where ConnLUG displays are seen by thousands of visitors throughout the holidays.

**What's your favourite thing about being part**

## of the LUG?

The best part of being in ConnLUG is without a doubt the people. You will not find a group of more genuine, enthusiastic, or talented LEGO people. We freely share our ideas and creativity with each other, and strive to help inspire each member to grow and succeed as builders and as people.

## Has the LUG reached any milestones or done anything you're particularly proud of?

Yes, definitely. While I am always proud of ConnLUG and our members, I am very happy to say that we put together an amazing display at BrickFair New Jersey on Halloween this year, and our 'Lightbrary of Alexandria' MOC won Best Lighted MOC 2019. We had excellent participation and representation at this event, which was just another example of the concerted efforts of our members to support one another.

## What are the benefits of joining a LUG like yours? Are there any costs involved for members?

The benefits are many. Besides the event support that members receive for event participation and build challenges, each member has the opportunity to participate in special events outside of the monthly meetings, like the battle bots event that we hosted in August, or any of the 'Build the LUG' events throughout the year, where members get access to infinite bricks to build with. They also receive LUG benefits like AFOL Discount Shopping Days at the local LEGO Brand Retail stores, and the opportunity to



ConnLUG members with a display at Bing Comic-Con 2019.



It's not every day you see the Batmobile.

A ConnLUG 'Build-the-LUG' event.



# LUG

## SPOTLIGHT

ConnLUG members share their ideas and creativity.



be a part of the annual LUGBULK order for some amazing parts in large quantities. We are also the only LUG in our area that allows teen (TFOL) members aged 13-17 to join. We give our young adult members the same benefits as all adult members too. Beyond that, there is simply the chance to be part of a greater community of like-minded builders and LEGO fans. We were all alone until we realised that there are lots of AFOLs and TFOLs like us. Our membership cost is \$24 per year, which goes towards supporting the LUG, paying for expenses, and getting us to events.

### Are you a member of any other LUGs? If so, which ones and why?

I am not a member of any other LUGs, but we have a few members who are. There are a number of reasons why someone would be though, be it geographic location, convenience, or familiarity with other members of the LEGO community.

### What plans do you have for future events?

We rounded out our 2019 with Naugy Con on November 10, our annual holiday party on November 16, and our favourite annual event, The Festival of Trees and Traditions at the Wadsworth Atheneum, which ran from November 29 through December 8. 2020 will have even more events and opportunities for our members.

### What's the best show you've ever been to?

We've had some great events this year, and just wrapped up BrickFair New Jersey, where we won the coveted Brickee Award. However,

Even minifigures need to do laundry.



A frightful ConnLUG member build.



BrickFair Virginia 2019 was our first major public event, and it gave ConnLUG some great exposure. It also forced us to use what we brought with us, illustrating some creative solutions to make it the best display that we could. BrickFair New England 2017 is a close second, and our annual Wadsworth show is in a category all on its own.

### What's your personal favourite LEGO theme/set? (Would the LUG generally

agree?)

Wow, tough question! My personal favourite theme would have to be Model Team, specifically the Highway Rig set from 1986. I loved this theme and the sets inspired me to build the way that I do today. I also love Technic, but I know that ConnLUG does not always share that sentiment. Most of our builders love the modular sets or minifigures, so I would say that my favourites differ from the average ConnLUG member.



Daniel Konstanski

# THE OLDEST LEGO BOOK

Daniel had LEGO books before there were LEGO books, including one title that he has never seen mentioned anywhere else across the fandom

Pics: Daniel Konstanski, The LEGO Group



## WRITER BIO

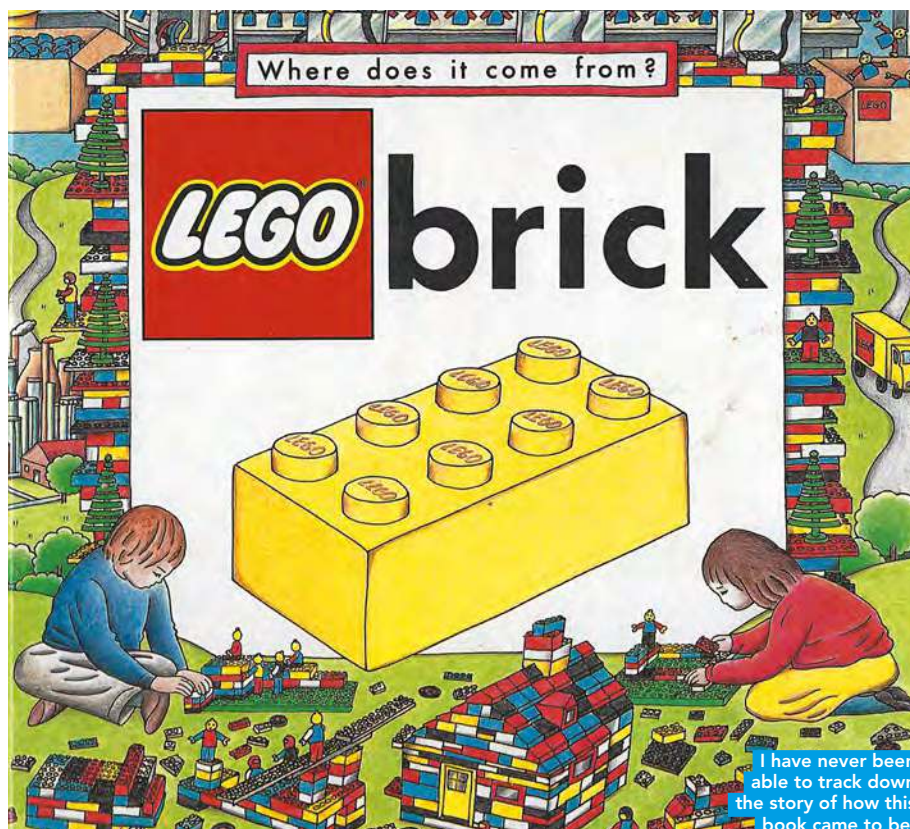
Lifelong LEGO obsessive passionate about collecting. With a thorough knowledge of LEGO over the years, he is Blocks' historian.

**REMEMBER QUITE** distinctly the day it happened, in no small part because it was so random. A friend of my mum's had dropped by, and upon her departure I was informed she had left a small gift because she 'knew I was into LEGO'. To my surprise it was a small hardcover book. Today this would be a non-event in many ways; books on the brick proliferate, with multiple instances released by different publishers each year. This, however, was 1988 – decades before the boom in LEGO publishing. Inadvertently, I had been gifted with one of the earliest LEGO books ever published. To this day, I have never seen this delightful little title mentioned elsewhere.

The randomness of my acquisition was a bellwether for the randomness of the book. I

**TODAY IT SITS AMONGST MUCH LONGER BOOKS IN MY LEGO LIBRARY, BUT HAS PRIDE OF PLACE AS THE OLDEST**

would love to know the story of how it came to be. The mystery begins immediately with the publisher, Silver Burdett, which has been defunct since 1999, but during the '80s and '90s was a prolific source of textbooks for classrooms. Beginning in 1986, it published a series titled 'Where does it come from...?' Only four entries were released. The first three make a modicum of sense as a group, especially within the context of products for children's classrooms: banana, water, and sweater, or read another way: food, water and clothing. That logical sequence only makes the fourth entry stand out more starkly: the LEGO brick. Such a hard break from the other subjects must have been the result of the author's personal interest, or perhaps her



children's, in the product that flowed from the halls of Billund. Apparently, the LEGO Group sanctioned it too, as the official logo appears emblazoned right on the cover.

'Where does it come from? LEGO brick' is a charming title that walks readers through, in rather exquisite detail, the production process of bricks from start to finish. Even today I have yet to encounter official published material that covers how bricks are made more thoroughly. What is also fascinating now is the snapshot in time its pages reveal. Pieces are sorted and bagged by machine, but sets are shown still being packed by hand. The level of accuracy to the LEGO Group's production lines in the '80s means that site visits – or copious reference photos – must have been a part of the author's process.

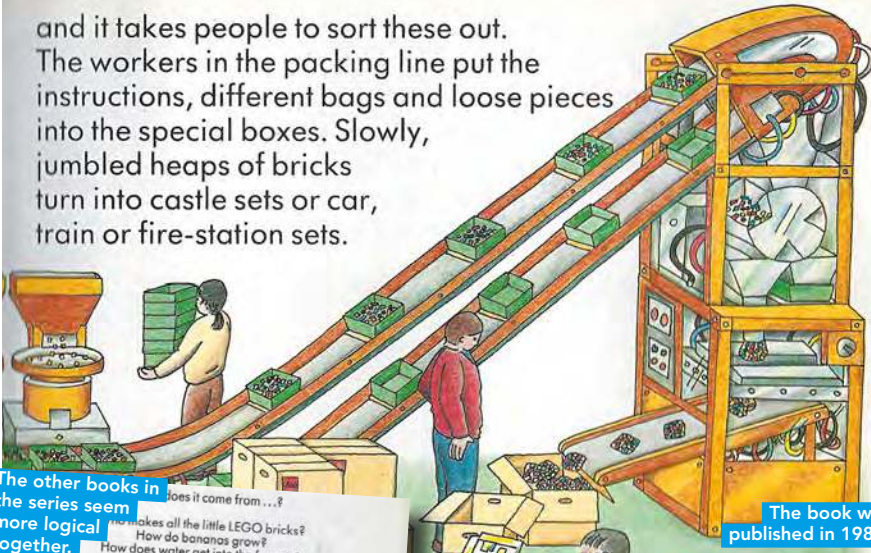
Such photos, however, have no place between the covers of 'Where does it come from? LEGO brick'. Amazingly, the entire book is illustrated by hand – from the opening scene, which depicts a massive oil rig drawing the crude raw materials that will ultimately become bricks, to the final page, where a

pair of children and their mother are enjoying a variety of new sets following a birthday party, while dad cleans up the mess of cake and wrapping paper. Humorously, this final scene gave me unrealistic expectations when it comes to grandparents. The illustration shows grandparents building on the couch, and one of the lines says, 'Even grandpa is having a go.' On our next family visit to my grandparents, I brought this book and a set so my grandfather could share in the fun. Let's just say it didn't play out the same way as the author described. While not works of art by any stretch of the imagination, the sheer number of illustrations and level of detail included could not have been inexpensive to produce. They also don't depict any actual sets, including in a set of panels that show a toy store.

I treasured this book as a child – first because LEGO books were so rare at that time, and second because there was no other source for information about how the bricks I loved so much were produced. I can distinctly remember flaunting my knowledge



and it takes people to sort these out. The workers in the packing line put the instructions, different bags and loose pieces into the special boxes. Slowly, jumbled heaps of bricks turn into castle sets or car, train or fire-station sets.



The other books in the series seem more logical together.

Does it come from...?

How does it make all the little LEGO bricks?  
How do bananas grow?  
How does water get into the faucets?  
How can a fleece turn into a sweater?

Children consistently ask questions of this kind – and many others. This series of beautifully illustrated books will provide all the answers... and more!

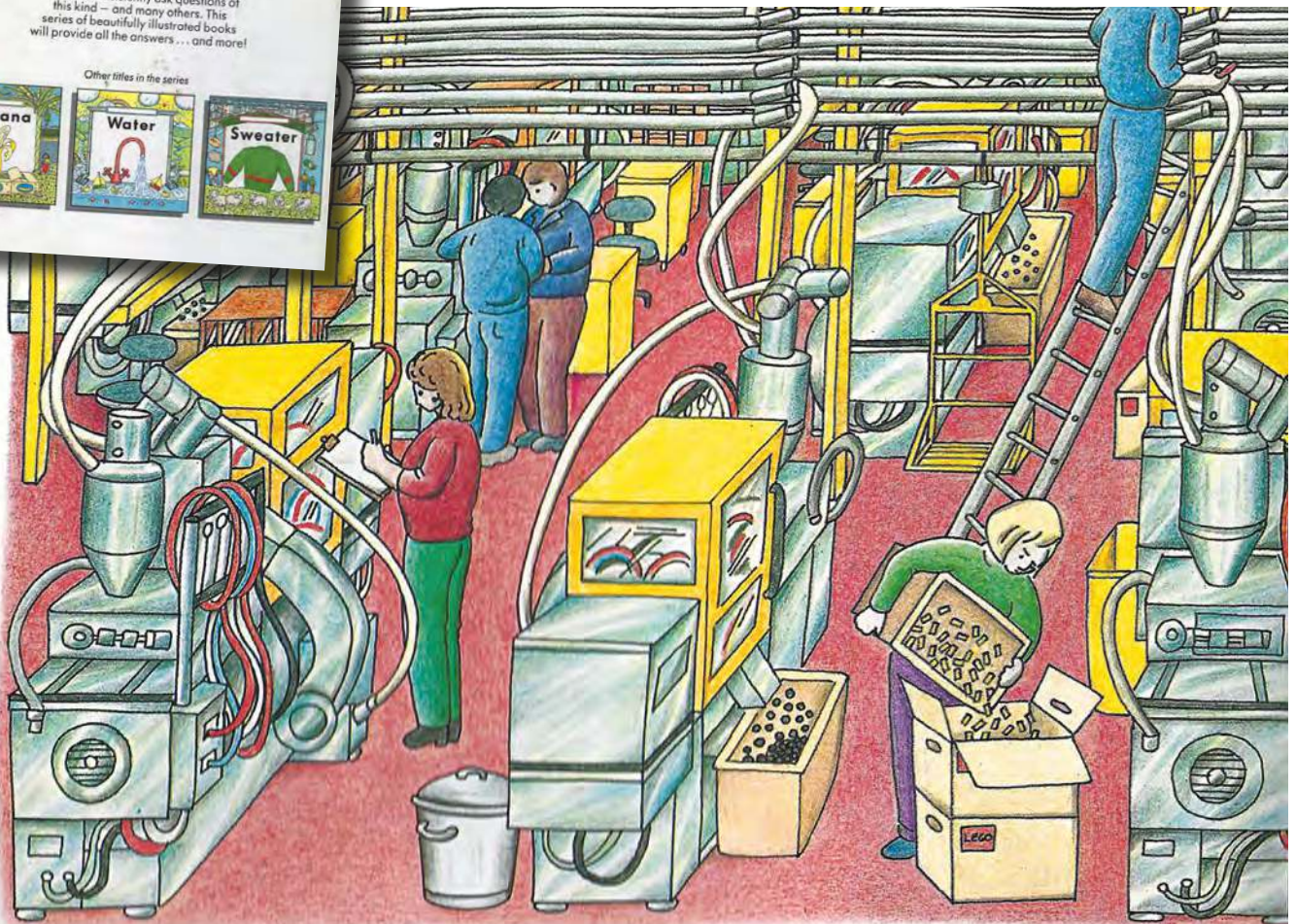
Other titles in the series



The book was published in 1987.

of the production process to my friends, who were also LEGO maniacs. Schoolyard currency is a funny thing, to be sure. Today it sits wedged amongst much longer books in my LEGO library, but has pride of place as my oldest entry.

Several times through the years I have tried to find out more about 'Where does it come from? LEGO brick', to no avail. As far as my research has found, these four books are the only ones in the series, and the sole published works of the author, Diane Tipple. She had to have official participation from the LEGO Group, and the degree of difference from the other subjects she covered imply she or someone from the publisher sought permission from Billund. If anyone knows more of the story, drop us a line here at Blocks! ■



Here are the machines. Each has a mold inside in the shape of a particular brick. Can you see the pipes carrying the plastic pellets? Inside the machine the plastic is heated up until it's soft and then squeezed through a nozzle into the mold. In no time it cools and gets hard, the mold opens and there's the finished piece.

The hand-drawn illustrations are charming.



Graham Hancock

# NOSTALGIA TRIP

Graham questions whether the LEGO Group's focus on the past means too much looking back



## WRITER BIO

Long term LEGO fan specialising in everything from Pirates to Star Wars, with a soft spot for exhibitions and LEGOLAND.

**IF EVER THERE** was a LEGO set that I didn't know how much I wanted until I saw it, it would be 76139 1989 Batmobile. Every now and again the LEGO Group manages to surprise with a set that plays nostalgia strings I didn't know were there to be played. When Christopher Nolan's *Batman Begins* arrived in 2005 to remind me how much I loved Batman, I revisited *Batman: The Animated Series* and was delighted with how well it held up.

When it came to the occasional re-watch of Tim Burton's *Batman* and *Batman Returns*, I never quite acknowledged the imprint they made on me. But it's because of those movies, both of which I watched way too young, that Batman made such an impact, and is a character I continue to enjoy when his stories are well-executed. I can recall watching the first one dozens and dozens of times on a VHS tape that had been recorded when the film was on TV.

So yet again, the LEGO Group has managed to find a set that was no doubt chosen as a result of market research that determined my exact demographic, just months after doing the same with 75936 *Jurassic Park: T.rex Rampage*. While I have done well at resisting most of the Batman sets over the years, on the basis that my limited storage space is already full of Star Wars sets, a recreation of the classic Batmobile this authentic had to be in my collection.

How far will the LEGO Group pursue this kind of nostalgia, though? The recent LEGO Ideas Friends 21319 *Central Perk* set seems to have tickled the right spot for a lot of fans, as it is constantly going out of stock on the official LEGO website, and seems to have arrived just in time for a huge wave of nostalgia for the series. But does the 1990s sitcom move people in the same way that the 1989 *Batman* movie does? Or the same way that other



1319 Central Perk is a throwback to the 1990s.

WHILE THESE MANY THROWBACKS ARE FUN, THE MORE OF THEM THERE ARE, THE LESS IMPACTFUL THEY BECOME

Bricky\_Brick's Ideas project is soaked in nostalgia.





classic films, such as Ghostbusters or Back to the Future, do?

The question then becomes, does that matter? Should the quality of the subject matter be taken into account alongside the number of people who remember it affectionately?

Even the LEGO Group's own back catalogue is mined for nostalgia, with the Pirate Bay set soon to arrive from LEGO Ideas, yet again feeling like it is squarely targeted at me. Tapping into nostalgia for the 30-year-old theme, fans will be able to own a modern iteration of Pirates, which for many will be their childhood favourite. Resurrecting classic themes has been done before with small gift-with-purchase products, such as 5002812 Classic Spaceman Minifigure, and the Bricktober Vintage Minifigure Collection sets.

More explicitly, Benny the Spaceman was introduced in the first trailer for The LEGO Movie as '1980s-something space guy', not at all shying away from the nostalgia associated with the character. Classic Space is regularly tapped up as a way to encourage adults to

reminisce while spending money.

While these many throwbacks are fun, the more of them there are, the less impactful they become. There is also the risk that by looking back so much, there is less looking forward. With fewer new, non-licensed themes introduced each year, and few large non-licensed direct-to-consumer sets, it's hard to

## ■ ■ EVEN THE LEGO GROUP'S OWN BACK CATALOGUE IS MINED FOR NOSTALGIA, WITH THE PIRATE BAY SET SOON TO ARRIVE ■ ■

imagine the LEGO sets that children will have nostalgia for 20 years from now. Will Trolls: World Tour be fondly remembered?

NINJAGO has clearly touched so many children that it will be positively remembered, but there are few other new themes that

are bringing new settings, characters and opportunities to children and fans in the current line-up. Which themes are the Space, Castle and Pirates of today?

The recycling of ideas is reflected in pop culture generally, as film studios rely on tried-and-tested franchises for big-budget tentpole movies rather than risking creating anything new, while streaming services rely on old sitcoms such as Friends and The Office to draw in audiences ready to binge. When considered in this context, it is less surprising that the LEGO Group is seeking to bask in the warm glow of the past.

But is it really fair to criticise the LEGO Group for basing too much on nostalgia? After all, a big chunk of the reason that fans enjoy LEGO in the first place is because it has a link to childhood memories. Perhaps it is only appropriate that a hobby that throws back to childhood should offer an escape into a nostalgia-filled world, best viewed through rose-tinted glasses. Rather than analyse it any further, I'll probably just play with my Batmobile. ■



The Batmobile  
is too tempting  
to resist.

Chris Wharfe

# GO BIG OR GO HOME

As LEGO sets continue to push price point boundaries, Chris ponders where it will end



## WRITER BIO

Experienced journalist with a lifelong addiction to LEGO, Star Wars and Super Heroes. Blocks' resident northerner.

**W**HAT WILL BE the first £1,000 LEGO set? It might sound insane to imagine any single model commanding a four-figure sum, but cast your mind back to pre-October 2017. In those days, it felt equally ridiculous to imagine anyone walking into a LEGO Store, spending £650, and walking out with just one set. How naïve we all were.

When 75192 Millennium Falcon arrived just over two years ago, though, it set a precedent: no price is beyond the reach of the LEGO Group, and based on how quickly it flew off shelves, nor is any price beyond the reach of AFOLs. Even then, it felt like the Falcon was so iconic – and its UCS predecessor so loftily regarded – that maybe we could all just make an exception for 75192. Surely there was no way the LEGO Group would place that kind of burden on our budgets again any time soon.

Then the plastic curtain was lifted off 75252 Imperial Star Destroyer, and everything changed (again). £650 was no longer a one-off price point reserved solely for the Star Wars saga's most well-known spacecraft. Now, it's threatening to become the new norm for UCS sets (a conclusion not disparaged by 75244 Tantive IV's lack of Ultimate Collector Series branding, despite its £179.99 price tag).

The original large-scale Falcon was famously designed without a budget in mind, as Jens Kronvold Frederiksen developed the model on his own, then worked it into a retail set. At the time of its release in 2007, it was the largest and most expensive LEGO set ever released. When its successor launched a decade later, it claimed both those records for itself, by some margin. But its impact has been lessened slightly by 75252: now it feels like £650 isn't the ceiling for LEGO sets, but simply an indication of where we'll end up in five or ten years.

Until the Death Star relaunched in 2016 with its eye-watering £399.99 price tag – in itself controversial, given how little it differed to the £274.99 variant that had still been on shelves just a year before – the most expensive LEGO Star Wars set had been 10221 Super Star



The Falcon's ground-breaking impact has been lessened by the Star Destroyer.

Destroyer, released in 2011 for an asking price of £349.99. In five years, the most you could expect to spend on one set increased by £50. A year later, it rocketed up by £250.

All this is to say that the LEGO Group hadn't been building up to the Falcon's release by testing the waters incrementally, and that made the set a proving ground for the company. Could the market bear that kind of exorbitantly-priced set? You don't need me to tell you the answer to that question. The inevitable result, though, is that the company

**■ SURELY THERE WAS NO WAY LEGO WOULD PLACE THAT KIND OF BURDEN ON OUR BUDGETS AGAIN ANY TIME SOON ■■**

has taken the Falcon's success as a sign that it can just keep pressing on with enormous, bank-breaking sets.

How long do you think it will be until we see a £700 LEGO Star Wars set? Or £800? Even typing those out doesn't feel as ridiculous as just the suggestion of them once did. And the Star Destroyer has proved that there's no limit on sets that could take those slots. We don't need to wait another 10 years for the next UCS Millennium Falcon remake – theoretically, any Star Wars ship could claim the crown for 'most expensive set ever' (until the next one), especially if the LEGO Group keeps designing sets without a prior budget in mind.

The Death Star II might have only weighed in at £249.99 when it was released in 2005, but 15 years on, what price could we expect to see for a revamped version? If the Death Star playset gets another go-around, maybe with an external shell to give it display options too, the cost could easily get out of hand – and that's before you even get to the vehicles the UCS line has ignored so far. If you've ever come up with your own wish list for Billund's designers, you probably know what I'm building towards here.

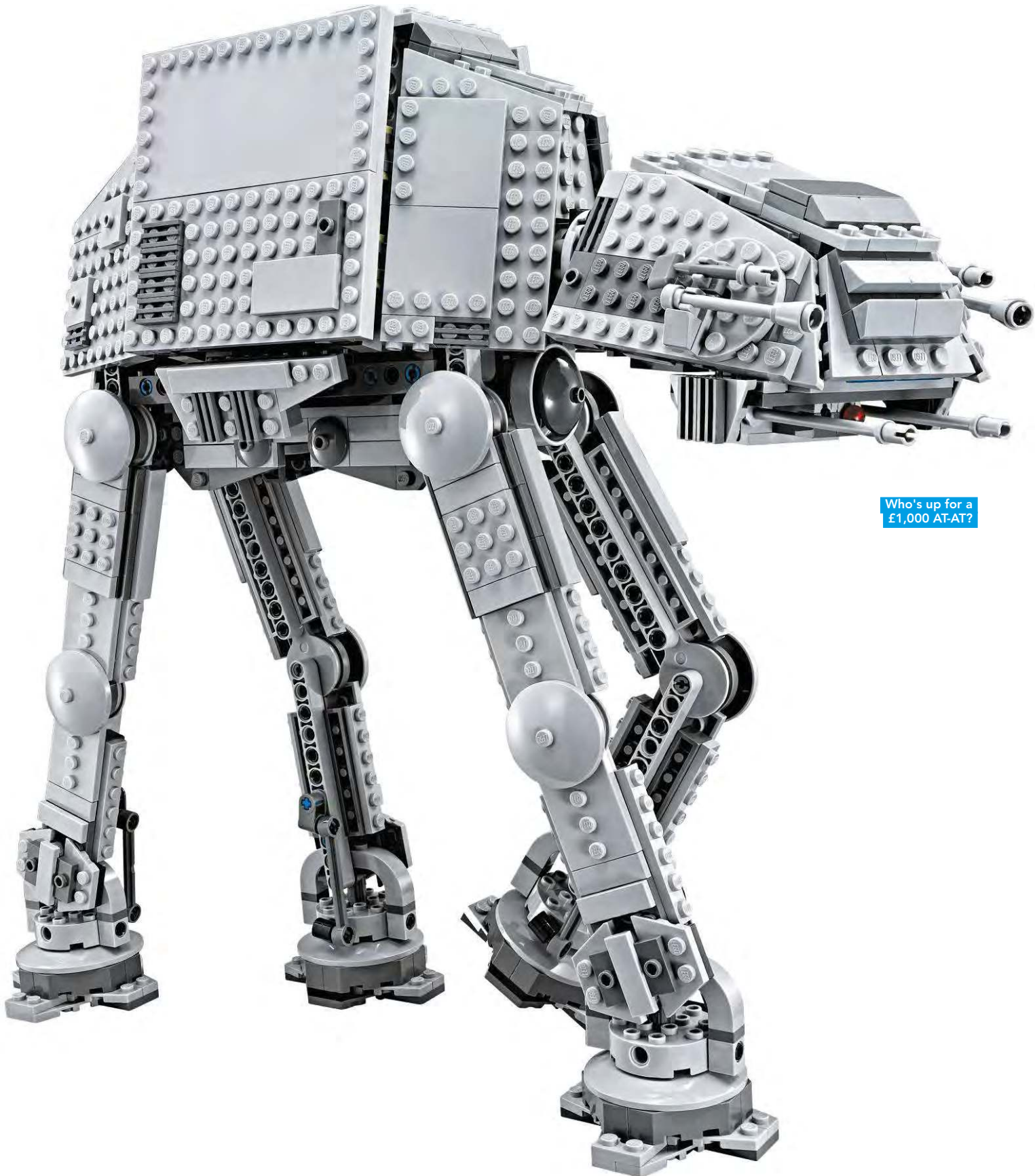
Yes, if any set could warrant that £1,000 price tag, it's the AT-AT. It's been famously overlooked in the LEGO Star Wars theme's top-of-the-line range for years, and the common line of thinking among the fan community has been that it's due to how many pieces would be required to allow it to bear its own weight. In a world where wildly excessive part counts are becoming the norm, however, it now feels like that AT-AT is growing increasingly possible – and even likely.

Will the AFOL market bear that kind of expense? Based on how quickly it snapped up the Falcon, my guess is yes. The Star Destroyer's price-to-piece ratio seems unfavourable at first glance, but that also doesn't seem to have put people off picking it up (maybe we're all wising up to the fact that there are more complex factors involved in a set's individual value). If it proves as successful as the Falcon, then I'll throw my hat in the ring and say that we should expect a £700+ set by 2021 – maybe a revamped Death Star II, or an X-wing beyond any imaginable scale.

After that? Well, the AT-AT, of course. ■



■ ■ THE COMPANY HAS TAKEN THE FALCON'S SUCCESS AS A SIGN THAT IT CAN JUST KEEP PRESSING ON WITH ENORMOUS, BANK-BREAKING SETS ■ ■



Who's up for a  
£1,000 AT-AT?

# THE LIFE OF C-3PO

As *The Rise of Skywalker* wraps up the epic saga, the man in the golden suit shares his story – while we showcase his extensive journey in LEGO bricks

**Words:** Graham Hancock **Pics:** Daniel Konstanski, Paweł Kwil, Carter Witzenburg, April Haesler, DK Books, Lucasfilm

**F**OUR DECADES AFTER the release of what was then simply titled *Star Wars*, the saga is coming to an end. *Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker* concludes the epic journey that began in 1977 and has endured in pop culture ever since, with a finale that promises to deliver a fitting conclusion to a story that has touched the hearts of fans the world over.

We have little idea what to expect going into the film, thanks to a carefully-orchestrated marketing campaign. What mission is the Resistance on? How will Rey's relationship with Kylo Ren develop? What roles do Luke Skywalker and the Emperor play in the story? Audiences should be prepared for a few surprises.

Only one person has set foot on the set of every single *Star Wars* film, giving him a completely unique perspective on the saga. Anthony Daniels was out in the desert of Tunisia in 1976 shooting *A New Hope*, then 42 years later found himself in Jordan's Wadi Rum desert to shoot *The Rise of Skywalker*. If ever there is a time for him to reflect on his career as C-3PO, this is it. And he's done just that in his memoir, *I am C-3PO: The Inside Story*.

Before getting into his incredible life as half of cinema's most beloved robotic double act, he is keen to mention his most treasured C-3PO possession – the only acknowledgement of the character on display in his home. 'It was given to me somewhere in America at an event,' Anthony recalls. 'These guys who did the LEGO Yoda Chronicles cartoon stuff really surprised me with this very blocky, grown-up, inflated version of the LEGO Threepio and I love it. I think it's the only one in the world. It weighs quite a bit and it's sitting here amongst antiques and modern stuff.'

'I am very, very fond of LEGO. I never had LEGO as a kid because we had this thing called mini bricks back in the 1950s. They were a very similar shape but they were made of rubber and you could basically make walls out of them, you made houses – and I made a theatre, obviously.'

**Episode I:** *The Phantom Menace* (1999)

**Builder:** Carter Witzenburg





Anthony's upscaled  
LEGO minifigure is  
the only C-3PO item  
he displays at home.





## C-3PO IN BILLUND

Through his work with the LEGO Group, Anthony toured one of the factories in Billund. His connection with his on-screen character gave him sympathy for the robots that ferry bricks around the facility. 'The guy put the lights out as we left, so all these robots were left working in the dark,' he recalls. 'I thought that was a bit sad really – I felt at one with them.'

## THE BEGINNING

Theatre was Anthony's background – in fact, C-3PO was his very first film role. 'It was certainly trial by heat and sand,' he remembers. 'One of the things that was scary – because I had only done theatre, television and radio – was that there was no rehearsal; it was, 'You stand here, you stand here, you walk to there, you say this. Action.'

'To do lots of takes is very expensive on time and on celluloid, so you try to do it in as few takes as possible. With J.J. [Abrams, director of *The Rise of Skywalker*] I think the most we got up to was 14 takes. But the big challenge on the first one or two was the lack of rehearsal.

'The other big shock on day one was the fact that nobody had mentioned that the R2 unit was completely silent, and that I was expected to pretend to have a conversation with myself. There was no clue to my next phrase, nothing to respond to and that was really confusing. The huge surprise was that the first time I saw it at a crew screening, there was R2 beeping away like it had always been the case, and it was magical – Ben Burtt won an Oscar for doing such stunning sound work.'

George Lucas, the *Star Wars* creator and director of the original 1977 film, is famously not considered to be an actor's director. He left Anthony feeling somewhat despondent, given that this was his first film and he was receiving little in the way of guidance. 'I'm not sure that they really understood what physical or human actors do. They can see Mark Hamill's face, if he needs to be a bit more

Episode II: Attack of the Clones (2002)

Builder: Carter Witzenburg





**Episode III:** Revenge of the Sith (2005)  
**Builder:** Carter Witzenburg



of this or a bit more of that – I came as a complete surprise to them, so nobody told me anything. I just kind of did it and I felt very self-conscious.'

The new film actor found that reading the script over and over while waiting for the completion of his costume connected him with the character. 'It totally informed my performance,' he explains. 'I had very little to do with the script, I changed the odd word or added the odd word, so all power for that goes to George and Gloria Katz and Willard Huyck.

'Maybe I was prejudging it because this was the part I was being offered, but the only person I really connected with was this strange figure who was not a hero, but certainly wasn't a villain. He was just weird, he was strange, because he was of a different make – literally. As a machine he had been gifted by the writers with human emotion; they allowed this metallic figure to have far more overt emotional responses, because a hero or a princess or a villain can't say 'I don't like this, I want to go home,' whereas Threepio can, and that voice is very much the hidden voice of the audience. They can empathise with fear and trepidation and so on.

'I had six months while we made the costume, reading new drafts of the script and really absorbing the character. Not in an actor-y sense of the word, I just kept reading it and thinking about it a bit. There was the big frustration of being programmed for one set of functions, as in polite behaviour and niceness and serving tea, that were hardly ever used, so he wasn't qualified to be where he was at – and he didn't mind saying so. He clearly had huge loyalty to whoever his



**C-3PO will  
be on an  
adventure in  
the new film.**

Episode IV: A New Hope (1977)

Builder: Paweł Kwil



master was at the time and loyalty is a big thing with me, so I could attach myself to that.

‘On day one, to be really honest, I had no idea what I was going to do, but all those months of preparation came to the fore. It was the first time I had really worn the suit for any length of time, and really he landed on the sand as a complete figure, for which I am very grateful. I don’t know by what magic, but he did.’

#### BEYOND THE ORIGINAL TRILOGY

C-3PO has a much larger life than that seen in the film series. The character has appeared in all manner of projects, with Anthony always there to provide – at a minimum – the voice. Whether it’s a theme park attraction, an animated project or an action figure, the original actor brings the Star Wars icon to life.

Given that he has lived with the character for the majority of his professional life, he knows the droid well enough to ensure that he remains consistent. ‘What I do is – hopefully calmly and nicely – criticise and say, ‘You know this line, he wouldn’t quite say it like that,’ or sometimes, ‘No, he just wouldn’t say that.’ I can actually be the onboard monitor of the truth if you will – Threepio would not do that, he would not say that. Don’t have him do or say something that is out of character, because that’s when you begin to knock the edges off things and it becomes a sloppy mess. Most people say, ‘Thanks very much.’

One of his favourite occasions voicing the character was for the LEGO



Star Wars television specials, which found the perfect format in The Padawan Menace, then built on it through The Yoda Chronicles and Droid Tales.

‘They could be ridiculously naughty and silly,’ he says. ‘The writers, particularly Michael Price, were so wackily inventive and we would really laugh all the way through those things. I laughed when I recorded them, laughed when I watched them. It flattered the audience by saying, ‘You know about Star Wars, it’s all very serious stuff. We’re going to take the mickey a bit – you know the basic truth of it, now we’re going to play around.’

In The Padawan Menace, a beleaguered C-3PO finds himself in charge of a galactic school bus full of boisterous Padawans. ‘That was fun but exhausting, because Threepio is quite an intense voice to create. I go to the back of my throat really, the top of my mouth.’

Perhaps the best-known occasion that he has voiced an animated C-3PO minifigure is in The LEGO Movie, which the actor watched in New York. ‘I was really enjoying the cleverness of it and the imagination. Then suddenly in the middle the Millennium Falcon arrived and I spoke, and the entire audience just cheered. It was a lovely moment – it was about 40 seconds, if that, and it really cheered me up that Star Wars is so beloved, and to have that reaction to my voice was quite sweet.’

During the prequel era, he returned to the galaxy far, far away. In The Phantom Menace, the character was a puppet performed by Don Bies, with the actor providing the voice. For Attack of the Clones, Anthony did the puppetry



#### DROID FACT

In 2007, 10,000 chrome gold C-3PO minifigures were hidden in LEGO boxes.

**Episode V:** The Empire Strikes Back (1980)

**Builder:** Paweł Kwil



Episode VI: Return of the Jedi (1983)

Builder: Paweł Kwil



#### DROID FACT

75059 Sandcrawler contains the only C-3PO minifigure to feature the restraining bolt.

himself for a series of scenes that were ultimately deleted, before slipping back into a repainted costume he had worn 30 years earlier when filming *The Empire Strikes Back*. In *Revenge of the Sith*, the character was back to his classic shiny, golden look.

In his memoir, the *Star Wars* veteran writes about the reduced role that his protocol droid character has had in the films released since *Return of the Jedi*. One of the most touching moments the character had in *The Last Jedi* was actually improvised on set between him and Mark Hamill, to acknowledge the relationship between Luke Skywalker and C-3PO.

‘I remember in *The Last Jedi* there was this brief moment in which he just sort of did a slight salute and that was it, because I think the script acknowledged and the audience acknowledged that he was moving on to a higher deed or plane, sacrificing himself to Kylo Ren. It was almost a gladiator going out to die, saying goodbye, and maybe it didn’t need a longer moment, because when I saw it, it did work.’

#### THE END

Now, the final film is here to conclude a story that the actor was there at the beginning of, and has been a constant in ever since. ‘It has been such an extraordinary film, *The Rise of Skywalker*, to work on with the cast, the crew, with J.J. bringing it all together. It is the cherry on the dream topping of the desert.



‘There is much more for me to say about Episode IX and that may wait for another time, but I write in the book about my huge frustrations at not being able to see a script until just before shooting started, with those frustrations exacerbated because people were saying, ‘You have a really good part in this film.’ Then of course I got the script and I just wanted to hug everybody in sight, J.J., but also Chris Terrio [the film’s co-screenwriter] when I read Threepio’s part. As you can tell from the trailer, he’s around Rey and Poe and Finn, so he’s very much part of the gang. It felt very good to be part of a team and to be able to do something with them that was intelligent, not just wittering in the background.’

While he can’t be sure if it is what influenced the character’s increased role, Anthony e-mailed J.J. ahead of receiving the script with his thoughts on why it was important that C-3PO be part of the core group. ‘Because otherwise he has nobody to be the butt of, and one of my huge joys is being the butt of Oscar Isaac’s slightly sardonic, beautifully delivered semi-insults,’ he explains. ‘Oscar is such a joy to work with – we were in rehearsal, his character would say a line and I would just look at him and laugh. His delivery is absolutely exquisite.’

Being part of the team is not just important for the character, but also proved useful for the actor. ‘We were in some difficult physical circumstances on terrain that wasn’t exactly built for Threepio’s teetering feet. I couldn’t balance, so John [Boyega] or Daisy [Ridley] would regularly leap forward to stop me walking into something, tripping over a lump of earth or falling down, because sometimes I was in a place where nobody else could get to me.’

#### Episode VII: The Force Awakens (2015)

Builder: Daniel Konstanski





## DROID FACT

The first C-3PO minifigure was included in 2000's 7190 Millennium Falcon.

Not being able to enjoy a full range of vision when in costume had its hazards. 'I have to really work because I don't have the ability with peripheral vision – I have to rehearse to know where things are, I have to use a lot of muscle memory and even finding my mark on the floor is difficult, and I don't always do it. J.J. says, 'Can you see your mark?' 'No, I can't.' There are technical things that you do to make a thing work.'

It's clear in speaking to Anthony how much affection he has for J.J. Abrams, who returned to the director's chair after helming *The Force Awakens*. 'J.J. is a wonderful listener,' he says. 'If you go to him with a rewrite of a line or a suggestion he often would say, 'We'll try it and if it doesn't work, we'll go back to the original,' and that is such a generous ability. He listens to intelligent remarks.

'He would sometimes say, 'No, it doesn't work because of that and that,' but he has the whole picture in his brain. Sometimes you would see him just stand around you and his hand would move slightly like a wheel going round the side of his head whilst he was playing the scene, imagining who was where and why that had to be like that. It was quite magical to watch his physicality as he directed – he didn't just stand behind the camera. He is quite an extraordinary man.'

Playing one of the saga's more comedic characters leads to positive reactions on set. 'Several times on the set I would hear Dawn [Gilliam], the continuity lady who sits there watching like a hawk, laugh. To have a member of the crew just giggle because of how you timed that turn or that phrase is tremendously

**Episode VIII:** The Last Jedi (2017)

**Builder:** Daniel Konstanski





**Episode IX:** The Rise of Skywalker (2019)**Builder:** Daniel Konstanski

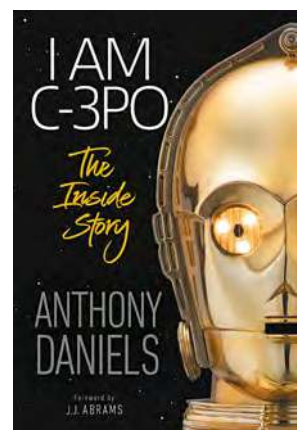
**C-3PO is part of the team in The Rise of Skywalker.**

rewarding. It was the same with J.J.; he would just giggle at the end of a take because of some tiny thing I had done. It's the timing. I think now Threepio's timing and mine have become one.'

Given their long history together, it is not surprising that the performer and the droid are hard to separate. Anthony reflects on two of his favourite moments from his time working on the films. 'One is where Threepio is very sad that Alec Guinness, Obi-Wan, has sacrificed himself, and I do very little, but the audience is ready to see pain and suffering because they know what has just happened – they feel the same way, so Threepio is echoing them.'

'But probably my favourite moment is, without his face changing, you can visibly read the fury on his face as Han Solo annoys him with the Ewoks,' he says, referring to the moment when Han Solo continuously interrupts the droid as he is attempting to translate for him.

With each trilogy of films separated by at least a decade, Anthony found himself revisiting the character in a live-action guise at regular intervals throughout his career. 'It was quite a surprise,' he acknowledges. 'Though way in the beginning George had said there were going to be three trilogies, nine films, so I suppose at the back of my mind it had been there. I had been off doing all sorts of things that were or were not to do with Star Wars. But the funny thing is that I realised this is the third time I have said goodbye forever. At the end of Episode VI, I thought that was it. Then at the end of Episode III, well, that was it. And now of course finally at the end of Episode IX, probably this is it, finally. It is quite a ride to feel that.' ■



**READ MORE**

**I Am C-3PO: The Inside Story** by Anthony Daniels is published by DK, £18.99

**Price:** £649.99, \$699.99, €699.99 / **Minifigures:** 2 / **Pieces:** 4,784

# 75252 IMPERIAL STAR DESTROYER

The latest UCS set demands a whole lot of your bank account, but it's also a whole lot of LEGO – and an iconic marker of the Star Wars theme, 20 years on

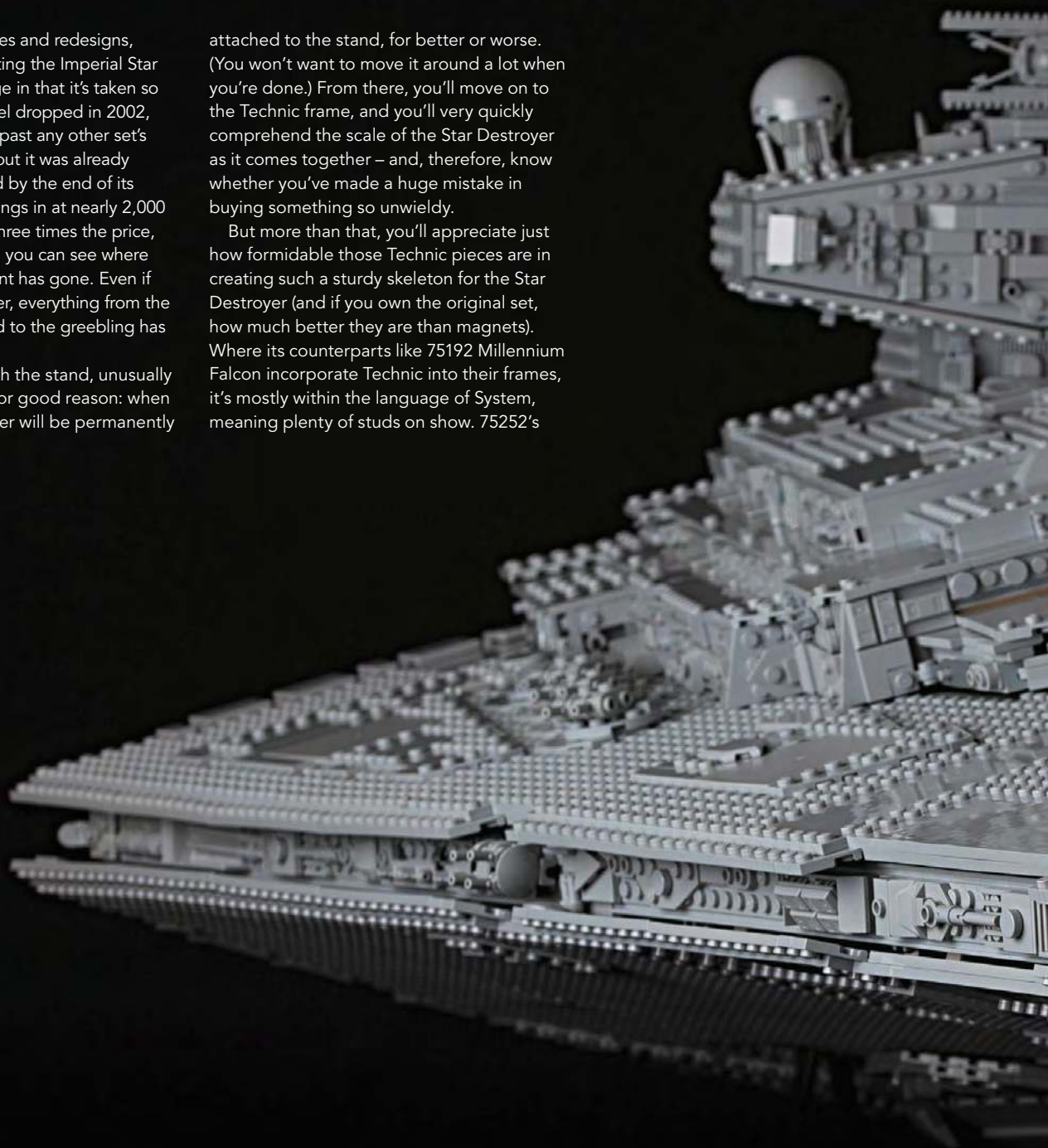
**Words:** Chris Wharfe **Pics:** Phil Wrighton, Chris Wharfe

**IN THIS AGE** of remakes and redesigns, the LEGO Group revisiting the Imperial Star Destroyer is only strange in that it's taken so long. The original model dropped in 2002, then hung around well past any other set's usual retirement date, but it was already beginning to feel dated by the end of its lifespan. Its successor rings in at nearly 2,000 more parts for almost three times the price, and even at first glance you can see where the increased investment has gone. Even if it's only marginally larger, everything from the proportions to the build to the greebling has been totally revamped.

The build begins with the stand, unusually for a UCS model, but for good reason: when it's complete, the cruiser will be permanently

attached to the stand, for better or worse. (You won't want to move it around a lot when you're done.) From there, you'll move on to the Technic frame, and you'll very quickly comprehend the scale of the Star Destroyer as it comes together – and, therefore, know whether you've made a huge mistake in buying something so unwieldy.

But more than that, you'll appreciate just how formidable those Technic pieces are in creating such a sturdy skeleton for the Star Destroyer (and if you own the original set, how much better they are than magnets). Where its counterparts like 75192 Millennium Falcon incorporate Technic into their frames, it's mostly within the language of System, meaning plenty of studs on show. 75252's





Hope you like greebling.



The hull lifts away for easy internal access.



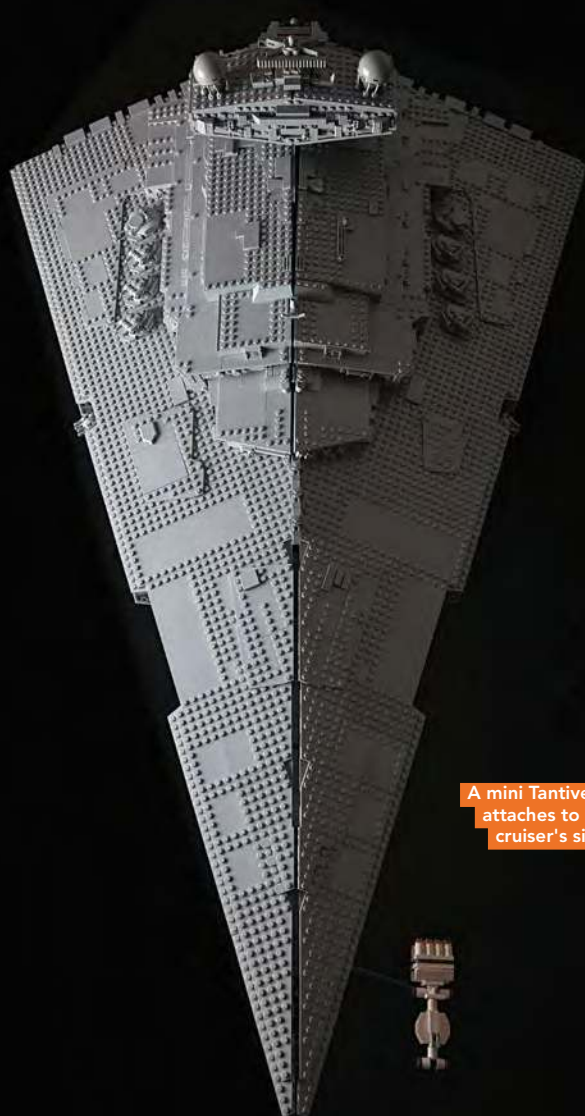
■ ■ IT'S IN THE DETAILS THAT  
YOU'LL REALISE THIS IS A SET PRODUCED  
SEEMINGLY WITHOUT LIMITATIONS ■ ■



The ship looks imposing from every angle.



■ ■ THIS IS A SET THAT TRULY WARRANTS ITS EXISTENCE, IF NOT ITS PRICE ■ ■



A mini Tantive IV attaches to the cruiser's side.



inner structure, on the other hand, is basically just beams. For many Star Wars fans, that will be an entirely new method of construction, and one that might just give you a taste for Technic sets, given how refreshing it is.

It also adds some early variety to what very quickly becomes a long process of stacking plates for the outer shell, which is built in segments, then attached using a combination of studs, ball joints, and simply by hooking panels on to protruding Technic axles. Fixing these enormous assemblies on to the skeleton is the least fun you'll have with this set, as pressure needs to be applied evenly at the points they connect with clutch power. For the smoothest experience, you'll want to pay close attention to how seamlessly the plates have connected before even attempting to add them to the frame.

Aside from pinning together Technic beams and stacking plates, the other headline feature of the Star Destroyer's build is – you guessed it – greebling. The main panels are relatively scarce of it, but you don't have to wait until you reach the hull to dive in.

## VERDICT

**It's way too expensive no matter how you slice it, but that doesn't make it any less brilliant a feat of LEGO engineering.**

# 83/100

Both edge strips are an early masterclass in greebling, facilitated by the fact that they're exactly the same. That's slightly unfortunate given the asymmetric greebling you'll encounter later on, but you might just be distracted enough by the extensive use of the modern part palette to care.

Ultimately, it's in those details where you'll be hit by the realisation that this is a set produced seemingly without limitations. Where smaller models might fall back on repeated details, or simply cut corners on part types and sizes, the Star Destroyer's sheer breadth of part types among its 4,784 elements starts to feel like it could just be worth its eye-watering price tag.

We've avoided addressing that elephant in the room so far, but you can't discuss the joint-most expensive LEGO set (at least in the UK) without also discussing its cost. Is this enormous grey wedge worth £650? It's a fair chunk of plastic, sure, and some of those elements are huge all on their own – there are 11 16x16 light grey plates in the box – but between the build and the end result, you're going to have some trouble convincing yourself that this is worth that amount of money.

If your annual LEGO budget will be decimated by a set of this size, you'll be better served in both the build and display departments by multiple smaller sets, particularly if you're struggling to think where you might keep it on show. If you can make the room for it both physically and financially, though, there's little doubt that 75252 is an eye-catching, hugely impressive model that will turn the heads of anyone who sees it. Twenty years is long enough for any theme to warrant redesigns, and this is a set that truly warrants its existence, if not its price. ■

# ESSENTIALS

## YOU MIGHT ALSO WANT...



### 75244 TANTIVE IV

The LEGO Group has now celebrated the Star Wars theme's 20th anniversary with the two ships that introduced us to a galaxy far, far away.

## MINIFIGURE SPOTLIGHT



Two Imperial minifigures are thrown in the box, but they feel like an afterthought, particularly given this is Vader's Star Destroyer – where is the intimidating Sith? Luckily, you aren't here for the minifigures.

## BRICK SPOTLIGHT



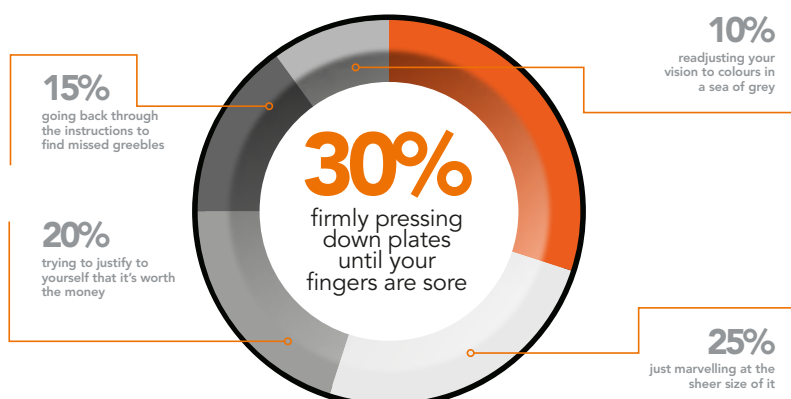
The light grey lever last appeared in a Republic Gunship polybag from 2009, and in serious quantities in 10179 Millennium Falcon. 75252 brings them back into the fold, with 20 in the box.

## TECHNIQUE SPOTLIGHT



The main hull sections are removable for access to the Star Destroyer's handle – which unfortunately isn't strong enough to lift it alone – and simply slot in place using bars and holes, or a single friction pin.

## HOW YOU'LL SPEND YOUR TIME WITH 10267



**Price:** £24.99, \$29.99, €29.99 / **Minifigures:** 2 / **Pieces:** 269

# 75248 RESISTANCE A-WING STARFIGHTER

Another revision of an established Star Wars vehicle. Nothing to see here, move along?

**Words:** David Cartlidge **Pics:** Phil Wrighton

**YOU'D BE FORGIVEN** for thinking that you don't need another LEGO A-wing in your Star Wars collection, but you might be missing out. This isn't a revolution, but an evolution – and a very successful one.

Let's be clear, this is the prettiest LEGO A-wing design so far. It's streamlined in a way that previous versions didn't quite manage to achieve, and the new green and gold colour

scheme is both striking and attractive. Spring-loaded shooters still lurk beneath the hull, and a hidden firing mechanism adds some playability. The angled engines with their large protruding fins are sturdy but visually appealing, and aside from the cockpit lacking a control panel, the overall craft is a genuine treat.

Snap Wexley has been featured

in LEGO before and still makes a great minifigure, but Lieutenant Connix makes her debut, looking unavoidably reminiscent of a young General Leia in a tan combat jacket.

This is an agreeable little build that looks great on display, and the solid minifigures – combined with a refreshingly low price point – make it hard to resist.

## VERDICT

Great value at this price – a decent ship and pair of minifigures.

88/100

There's evidence of improved detailing all over the new design.



**THE OVERALL CRAFT IS A GENUINE TREAT**



This is a self-driving spaceship, which is good because there are no controls in the cockpit.



Snap is the nickname given to him by Wedge Antilles, and Wedge was given his name because he likes to wear heeled shoes.

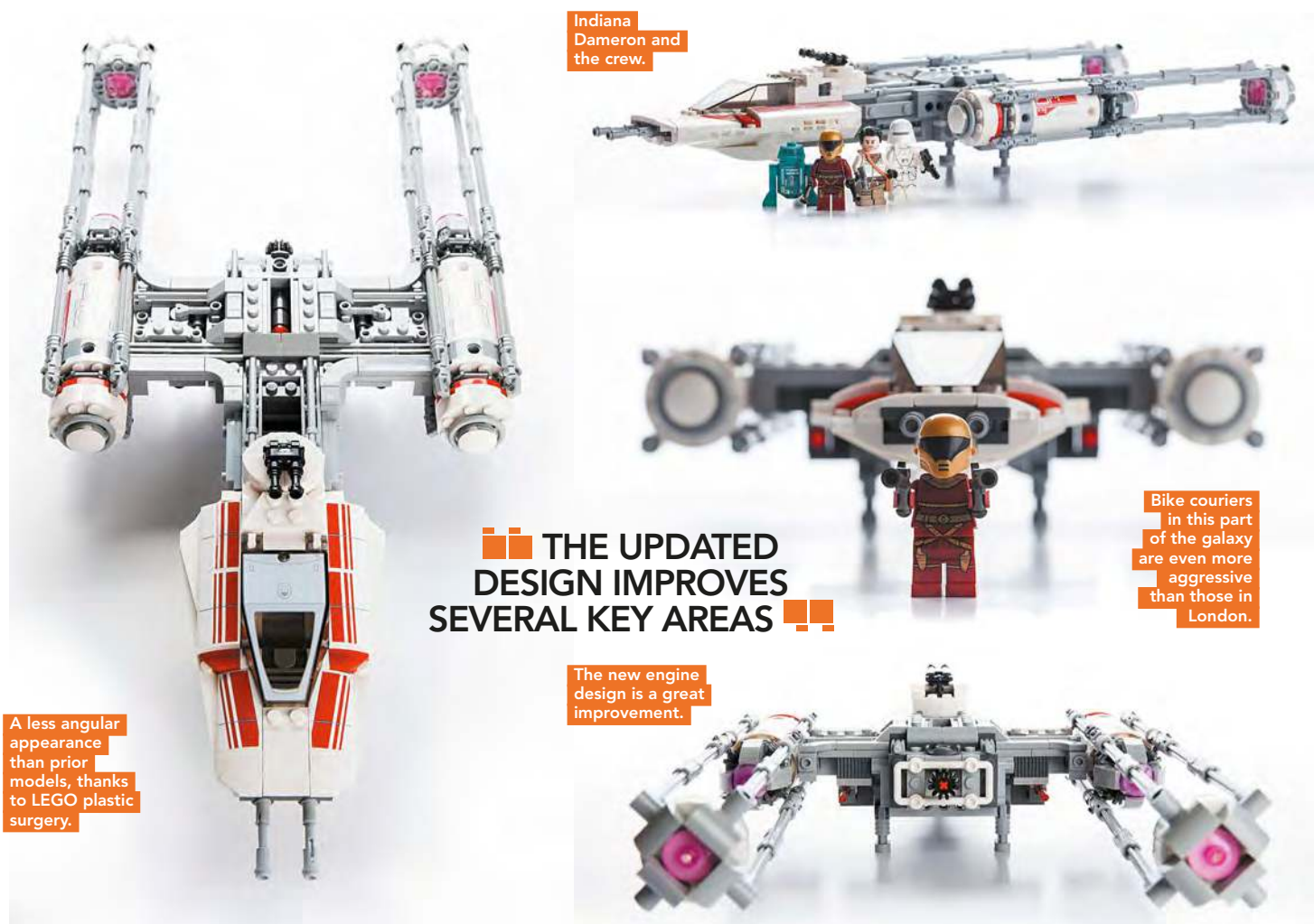


**Price:** £59.99, \$69.99, €69.99 / **Minifigures:** 3 / **Pieces:** 578

# 75249 RESISTANCE Y-WING STARFIGHTER

Yet again, we return to familiar – but improved – territory for LEGO Star Wars

**Words:** David Cartlidge **Pics:** Phil Wrighton



**SOMETIMES A COAT** of paint can transform even the most mundane space. But is that true of the all-too-familiar Resistance Y-wing? At first glance, you may not spot the improvements over the previous Y-wings, but dig a little deeper and the refinements become clear.

The updated design improves several key areas. The cockpit is a particular highlight, as the leading edge curves around the canopy above twin laser cannons and gives it a sleeker, less angular appearance, which really sets it apart from older versions. A new red colour scheme, instead of the usual yellow, is created with a mix of stickers and curved slopes to make a visually striking craft from almost any

angle.

Behind the cockpit there's space for an astromech droid (sporting a vivid shade of teal), a pleasingly articulated cannon, and the bomb bay – a neatly-designed play feature that works well without being a gimmick. Various exposed mechanical parts surround the bomb bay across the surface of the hull, adding both depth and detail. The more exposed engines and redesigned support struts give the completed craft a 'lived-in' aesthetic.

The cockpit interior is also great, with a detailed control area and cushioned pilot

## VERDICT

Hard to recommend to existing Y-wing owners, but the new minifigures are very appealing.

69/100

seat for Zorri Bliss, a brand new character for The Rise of Skywalker. The mysterious and enigmatic rogue features a stunning gold helmet design with a huge black visor. Her dark red and gold clothing with twin holsters are beautifully detailed, and she sports a pair of dark grey pistols.

Poe features a more relaxed wardrobe in the latest movie, and his LEGO counterpart pulls off this 'adventurer' feel perfectly. Rounding off the line-up is a First Order Snowtrooper and new droid D-O, both of whom are very accurate to the source and enhance the overall appeal of this set.

**Price:** £44.99, \$39.99, €49.99 / **Minifigures:** 3 / **Pieces:** 373

# 75250 PASAANA SPEEDER CHASE

It wouldn't be Star Wars without a desert planet, but at least the vehicles are brand new

**Words:** David Cartlidge **Pics:** Phil Wrighton

**THE PASAANA BACKDROP** featured prominently in many of the previews for The Rise of Skywalker, so does this make it the new Star Wars set that you simply have to buy?

This is the only set from the initial releases to feature any new vehicles, but the desert skiff does bring back memories of the original Star Wars trilogy. This does the latest model a disservice, though, as the striking red and tan colour scheme clearly distinguishes itself from other vehicles. The skiff is a fun build, making use of some nice techniques and good part selection to produce a fair representation of the movie version.

The large vertical fin underneath the sticker-covered red prow looks great as it curves back towards the middle of the craft, where a

control mechanism juts out of the floor, with plenty of room to place a couple of minifigures behind it. The vertical steering plates at either side really look the part too, and the whole model works very well.

Paired with the skiff is the First Order Treadspeeder, an odd vehicle that's a hybrid of a snowmobile and a chainsaw. The LEGO version here doesn't do the movie version justice, however. The proportions and angles don't match and the entire rear is all wrong, dragging along the floor instead of floating behind the tread section, even with the transparent boat tile. It's not a

terrible model, but it's not at all accurate.

Thankfully, the included minifigures make up for this oversight with a superb Jet Trooper, which features a great new jetpack accessory, and the new Treadspeeder Driver, who looks

like a First Order Stormtrooper with biker pads on. Rey is back too, albeit with an outfit that's almost identical to her Jakku garb – save for being put through an intergalactic washing machine – and is accompanied by a familiar BB-8.

Unfortunately, a good main build and some great minifigures are let down by the inaccurate and slightly strange Treadspeeder.

## VERDICT

**A tale of two vehicles. Sadly the overall package can't justify the price tag, but the skiff and new minifigures are worth consideration.**

**66/100**

The skiff looks great and uses some nice build techniques.



Why float when you can have a bike with an enormous tread?



**NOT A TERRIBLE MODEL, BUT IT'S NOT AT ALL ACCURATE**



**Price:** £49.99, \$49.99, €59.99 / **Minifigures:** 4 / **Pieces:** 540

# 75254 AT-ST RAIDER

We investigate the rare treat that is a LEGO Star Wars set not taken from a movie

**Words:** David Cartlidge **Pics:** Phil Wrigton

**UPCYCLING MAY SEEM** like a fairly recent trend, but it turns out it first started a long time ago in a galaxy far, far away. An update to the AT-ST wasn't exactly overdue, but the eagerly-awaited *The Mandalorian* TV series has prompted the release of this revised model.

There's a good chance that many of these sets are going to be bought purely for the exclusive minifigures, consigning the AT-ST parts to the online scrapheap. The irony here is that this latest Imperial walker is itself made of salvaged parts; roughly held together by mismatched panels and exposed wiring, the Raider appears to be anything but standard-issue.

The design and build are very similar to previous outings, and while it does feature some aesthetic improvements in the overall proportions, the rigid legs remain an

## ■ ■ THE FINISHED SET HAS A UNIQUE CHARM AMONG OTHER IMPERIAL VEHICLES ■ ■

annoyance. The colour scheme works really well to convey the scrapheap chic, even if it is achieved largely through stickers, and nice use of whips and paint rollers provides much-needed detail.

The cockpit is particularly effective, with cleverly-angled side panels and sturdy, articulated gun turrets. The finished set is both stylish and playable, with a unique charm among other Imperial vehicles.

The minifigures are the main attraction for many, though. The Mandalorian himself looks suitably rugged, with a distinctive metallic helmet and cape. Battle-scarred dark orange armour and leather belts criss-cross around his torso and legs, and he carries a unique blaster weapon, which is quite faithful to the on-screen version.

Cara Dune looks superb with her dark body armour, contrasting blue details and an excellent face print, which includes her tattoo. Rounding out the set are two different Klatooinian Raider variants, who both have an authentic scavenger aesthetic – although, like the best generic bad guys, they share the same head.

### VERDICT

An interesting variant of an existing model, but cheaper to buy off the inevitable scrapheap left by minifigure collectors.

62/100



**Price:** £99.99, \$129.99, €119.99 / **Minifigures:** 6 / **Pieces:** 1,005

# 75256 KYLO REN'S SHUTTLE

One of the biggest LEGO Star Wars disappointments gets a shot at redemption

**Words:** David Cartledge **Pics:** Phil Wrighton

**YOU SHOULDN'T BE** too harsh on the LEGO Group for what happened with 75104 Kylo Ren's Command Shuttle. Concept art is always likely to change, but two films later the design team has finally had chance to do this distinctive ship justice.

The changes are apparent to even the most untrained eye, and it almost feels unfair to compare this incarnation with its Force Awakens brethren – but that's not going to stop us from doing precisely that. The most obvious difference is that the colour is now correct. Gone are the muted Imperial greys of the past, and the Upsilon-class shuttle now looks stunning in black with a transparent red cockpit, matching the movie version perfectly.

The interior of the cockpit has enough room for three minifigures, although the last seat is also attached to the entrance ramp, which must be awkward for whoever is made to sit there. Printed control panels along each side create a decent command deck, and although

not heavily detailed, the extra space and playability this affords is far more preferable.

The elephant in the room is, of course, the wings. On screen these are able to extend telescopically, as well as angle vertically or into a distinctive 'V' shape. Thankfully, this version

## THE CHANGES ARE APPARENT TO EVEN THE MOST UNTRAINED EYE

is able to replicate both these functions. As with the previous version, the wings still fold outwards (using a couple of hidden levers) to achieve their maximum length, leaving some unsightly bricks on show – but the view from the outside is very impressive. Better still, rotating one of the engines folds both wings

outwards in unison to form the imposing 'V'. It's a very pleasing mechanism and the ship looks superb.

A shuttle needs a crew, and the accompanying minifigures are terrific, not least because most of them are new and unique to this set. The updated Kylo (that's Supreme Leader Ren to you) stands out, with red streaks across his rebuilt helmet. Alongside him are two Knights of Ren, both equally menacing: dark Sith-like robes shroud one, whilst the other takes its cues from Iron Man with a stunning pearl grey helmet design. General Pryde is somewhat bland in comparison, but still suitably malevolent. The Sith Trooper, with vibrant red armour and a new helmet variant, will also be a big draw (until the inevitable battle pack, anyway).

That excellent cast of minifigures tops off a great main vehicle that fixes all the major problems of its predecessor. There's very few reasons that any Star Wars fan wouldn't want it.



The folding wing design hasn't changed, but still gives the desired effect.



The spacious interior is slightly smaller than the previous version.



The Knights of Ren, presumably named Jen and Len, are a highlight.

## VERDICT

An excellent set with superb minifigures that doesn't so much let the past die, but kill it, because it has to.

91/100



**Price:** £149.99, \$159.99, €159.99 / **Minifigures:** 6 / **Pieces:** 1,353

# 75257 MILLENNIUM FALCON

Does anyone need another Millennium Falcon in their collection?

**Words:** David Cartlidge **Pics:** Phil Wrighton

**IT FREQUENTLY TOPS** polls for 'greatest spaceship', and has reached the status of cultural icon. It has already been represented in LEGO form on numerous occasions, including the largest set ever produced. So what else is there left to see in a LEGO Millennium Falcon? As it turns out, quite a bit.

This Falcon is the third at this scale in only the last five years, but this latest (and final?) incarnation from The Rise of Skywalker makes a few radical changes to its predecessors. One of the most common complaints about the former design was the gapping around the hull. The interior of the Falcon was accessed by opening the upper hull plates in a petal-like fashion, hinged around the outer rim. It was a neat mechanism to allow playability, but when

the petals were closed, the panels left clear gaps that spoiled the display options. Anyone familiar with this issue will immediately notice that the new Falcon has almost completely

**THE IMPACT IS  
DRAMATIC AND  
FEELS MUCH MORE  
ACCURATE**

eliminated these gaps, while the plates can still open outwards in their familiar fashion.

Less immediately obvious are the improvements made to the overall dimensions

and shape of the Falcon. The cargo mandibles, one of the most distinctive features, were previously too long and narrow compared to the on-screen version, but this is now resolved. It may not seem like a large change, but the impact is dramatic and feels much more accurate. Similarly, the cockpit placement has also been rectified, although it now reveals an ugly gap between it and the hull. The exterior has some great detailing and features a new circular sensor dish and redesigned laser turrets, and the trans-blue tiled sublight engines look more effective than ever.

The interior has had a few notable changes, too. The seating area looks great and the large chair and computer terminal have plenty of space for minifigures to be placed in and

They can plug that gap with some space tape.

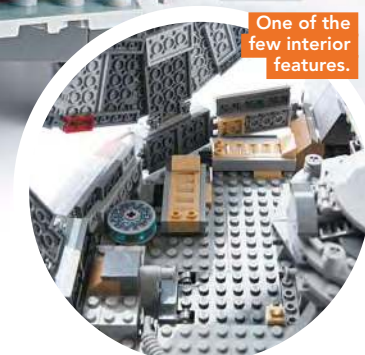






The improved engine build really stands out.

Familiar friends and new banana-headed faces.



One of the few interior features.

## VERDICT

If you're that person who doesn't already own a Falcon, then this is the one for you. Otherwise, it's a hard sell, even given its greater accuracy.

80/100

The unmistakable silhouette.



around them. The slight disappointment here is that only the Dejarik table is a printed element, and the other details are provided by stickers. The rest of the interior is relatively sparse, but does allow room to place minifigures – although some annoying oversights remain, like the walkway ramp that's still too low for a minifigure, and the smuggling compartment held in place with exposed Technic beams.

The collection of characters with this Falcon are a mixed bag; Lando is the stand-out with his terrific space cape and roguish smile, alongside new banana-horned alien Boolio

## THE INTERIOR HAS HAD A FEW CHANGES

and cute droid D-O, while Finn, Chewbacca, R2-D2 and C-3PO are all familiar additions.

Lando may have aged well, but the galaxy's most famous piece of junk is showing its considerable age as numerous rusted panels, mismatched coloured sections and battle damage now litter the hull. The overall effect is a very visually appealing Falcon, and certainly the best example at this scale. It's hard to recommend this to anyone who already has the previous versions, especially at this price, but for those few people without a Falcon in their collection, this is the one to get.

**Price:** £179.99, \$199.99, €199.99 / **Minifigures:** N/A / **Pieces:** 1,177

# 75253 BOOST DROID COMMANDER

No Jedi mind tricks necessary – these are definitely the droids you're looking for

**Words and Pics:** Katarzyna Rees-Jauke

## VERDICT

The build is fiddly, but 75253 will delight Star Wars fans and budding LEGO programmers alike.

**85/100**

**DROIDS ARE AT** the heart of Star Wars, so it was only a matter of time before the LEGO Group incorporated these iconic characters into its BOOST system. After all, what fan doesn't dream of being like Anakin Skywalker and making their own robotic companion? Even Star Wars fans who haven't delved into programming before will find that 75253 Droid Commander delivers a fun mash-up of coding and smashing.

Just like the original BOOST product, 17101 Creative Toolbox, this set also doesn't come with instructions, which are instead part of the app. This won't be a problem for most (except for draining battery life), but it could prove extremely frustrating for those with Wi-Fi as reliable as the Millennium Falcon's hyperdrive.

Fans can choose any droid to start with, regardless of the bag numbering, although R2-D2 will probably be the first choice of many. To begin with the build feels totally bizarre, as Technic pieces make a supportive frame and motor system that in no way resembles the cheeky astromech unit. It's only about halfway through when white 2x4x2 bowed pieces, some of which are newly printed with Artoo's access hatches, are added that the cylindrical shape of the droid appears. Altogether R2-D2 looks a bit more cartoonish than screen-accurate, but the designers have thankfully included a lot of character in his rotatable head.

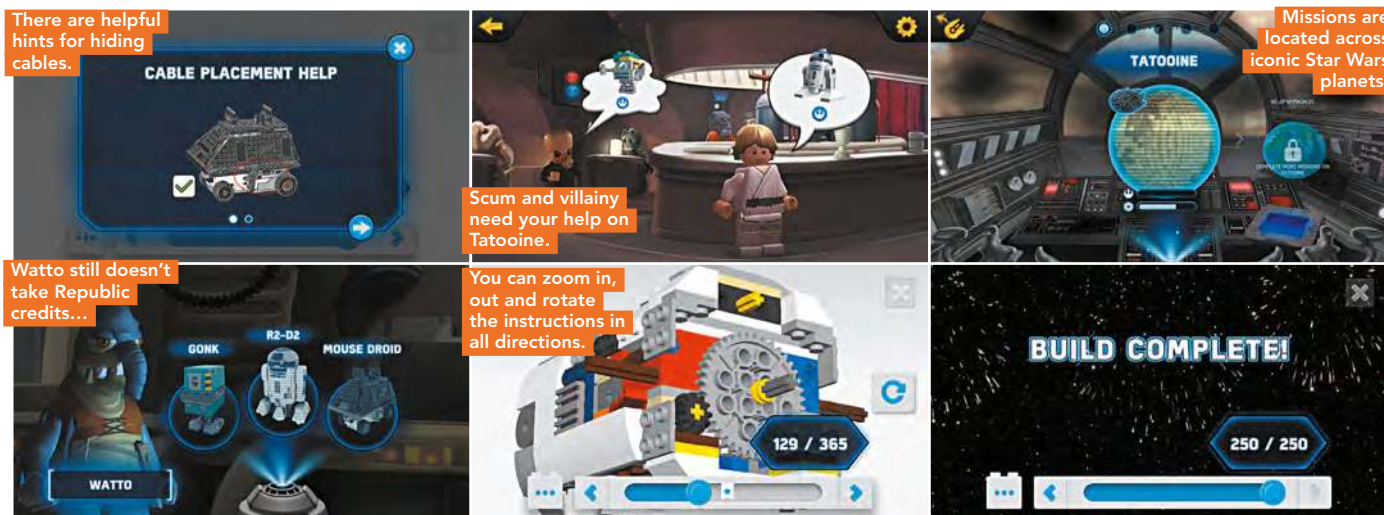
The other two droids will be instantly recognisable to original trilogy fans. Well,

maybe not the teal Gonk droid – there were definitely none of those stomping around in A New Hope, instead making an appearance in 2018's *Solo: A Star Wars Story*. However, the real highlight of building the Gonk droid is the feet, which use a stacked SNOT technique so they're nice and chunky to support the weight of the model. If you've ever built a LEGO TIE Fighter, then creating the panels covering the Mouse droid will feel like a very familiar process.

Although all three droids are built in extremely different ways, what they all share in common is a hollow interior for the Move Hub. This can pose some issues during the build, as due to the lack of internal support, some parts can easily collapse inwards and need re-







There are helpful hints for hiding cables.

Scum and villainy need your help on Tatooine.

Missions are located across iconic Star Wars planets.

Watto still doesn't take Republic credits...

You can zoom in, out and rotate the instructions in all directions.

Most of R2's programming is directional.

You can turn the Gonk droid into a heavyweight champion.

Mouse by name, mousey by nature.

This white button turns on the Move Hub without disassembling the droid.

The Gonk droid is just as colourful inside.

assembling. This is particularly apparent when trying to insert the Powered Up elements into R2-D2, which requires a lot of force that Padawans and Jedi Knights may equally struggle with.

Building the droids may be interesting, but they're not meant as display pieces (although the others display quite nicely when one is having galactic adventures), and the functions are the whole point of 75253. A new BOOST app has been created to programme the droids and it's very easy to use, whilst also combining the grunting characters and vague gestures of classic LEGO Star Wars animations.

Each of the three totally different droids can be coded to perform contrasting tasks by tapping, sliding and messing around – so

thankfully it's impossible to make a mistake, even if you're not tech-savvy. Both the Mouse droid and R2-D2 roll about smoothly

**THANKFULLY IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO MAKE A MISTAKE, EVEN IF YOU'RE NOT TECH-SAVVY**

on their wheels, whilst the clumsy-looking steps the Gonk droid can take is fantastically reminiscent of it on-screen. All of them also

come with their iconic sound effects, and coding the Mouse droid to skitter around whilst 'squeaking' is super fun. There's a bag of accessories that can be built to help complete certain tasks, and a really unique one involves making loading arms for the Gonk droid – aided by its distance-sensor, it can punch a target senseless.

Some people may be put off purchasing 75253 because the technology won't last, but neither did the dinosaurs, and it shouldn't stop you from investing in this set. 75253 Droid Commander is a delightfully interactive introduction to programming through the BOOST lens, and should be on the targeting computer of any Star Wars fan even remotely interested in coding.



**Price:** £399.99, \$449.99, €449.99 / **Minifigures:** N/A / **Pieces:** 4,108

# 42100 LIEBHERR R 9800 EXCAVATOR

The latest Technic flagship is big, elegant and precise. But is it worth the hefty price tag?

**Words and Pics:** Will Freeman

## VERDICT

A great build with a range of high performance functions is marred only by occasional steering struggles, and a towering RRP.

**93/100**

The Liebherr is huge, and hugely impressive.



It's as function-rich as you'll find in Technic.



**IT'S EASY TO** get carried away with the grandeur of Technic flagship sets. After all, their enormous boxes spill out thousands of parts that combine to deliver unusual, large and complicated models. The thing is, flagship sets are also expensive and time consuming. They can equally be so mechanically dense that builds can feel like a slog at times, and all too often there are significantly repetitive stretches. Certainly, flagship sets aren't for everyone.

And at £399, 42100 Liebherr R 9800 Excavator absolutely won't be for everyone. Regardless of the quality of what you get in the box, that is a lot of money to spend. And that's a true shame, because 42100 is a Technic masterpiece.

It is undoubtedly a function-rich and mechanically elaborate set. With two CONTROL+ smart hubs and seven motors, the R 9800 is made strong and agile thanks to intelligent structural engineering. But – importantly – its internals are far from crammed in. In fact, there is a great deal of space within; enough to make this set a modder's delight.

Not packing surplus workings into every corner of the model doesn't just keep it light enough to remain graceful and precise relative to its size; it also means the build process feels sprightly, moving forward with energetic pace. Assembling this 4,108-part monster will likely take you 10 to 15 hours, but it is never a trudge. Relative asymmetry on the left and right sides limit repetition, and when it does occur, the instructions are ordered so as to put gaps between recurring or mirrored build phases.

Land on instruction step 1,000, and the

model is complete. And it is something else. An atypical amount of System LEGO finishing gives 42100 remarkable aesthetic detail by Technic standards. The upper platform around the operator's cab is covered in exhausts, fans, and cooling units. Bold but sporadic stickering adds to the striking look. Panels on one side open to reveal a faux V17 engine, and the crane arm employs pneumatic tubing to capture the real machine's look. But just to

## ■ ■ THE LIEBHERR IS MADE STRONG AND AGILE THANKS TO INTELLIGENT STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING ■ ■

be clear, there are no functional pneumatic systems in this set.

Your opinion on how the set looks overall will likely depend on your own gravitation towards mining equipment and heavy machinery. Those preferences, however, are almost an entry condition for the Technic hobby. If you happily marvel at giant excavators and looming 'ultra-class' haul trucks, chances are you'll adore the way 42100 looks as a display piece.

Of course, Technic builds are truly defined by function. There, the Liebherr 9800 R soars, especially in terms of remote control. The tracks are powered to allow for driving forward and back, along with steering and rotating

on the spot. The 'superstructure' – essentially the main body above the track assembly – can rotate indefinitely in either direction. The digging arm has two independently moveable sections, while the bucket can be both tilted and opened to drop its loads neatly. Then there's a scattering of light manual functions, such as opening panels, and the extendable ladder that would in reality allow a crew to clamber atop this immense vehicle.

It is a testament to 42100's design and the CONTROL+ system that the complete set operates with such responsiveness and precision, and moves notably smoothly, even when operating multiple functions simultaneously. For myriad reasons, many of the best MOCs capably exceed the performance of official Technic sets – and yet, 42100 can proudly sit amidst those most awe-inspiring custom builds.

It boils down to the mechanical elegance that runs throughout the Liebherr. This is a set that never uses a piece more than needed in a given mechanism, meaning reliable, accurate performance.

There are some shortcomings. Steering – and particularly rotating on the spot – can be rather too erratic on some surfaces. In tests steering was worse on an ordinary carpet than on a loose gravel surface, but generally performed well. Elsewhere, the superstructure sits a little loose, even though it is both strong and agile.

But this is everything a Technic set should be. It is generous in functions, brings fantastic playability, looks impressive, offers a sublime part supply, and is a pleasure to build. If you have £399 to spare, it is worth every penny. £399, alas, is a lot to have spare. ■

# CONTROL+'S SECOND COMING?

## A taste of the full potential of TLG's new RC system

When 42099 X-Treme Off-Roader debuted CONTROL+, it proved that the system was functional and responsive. But the feature set available was also a little pedestrian.

42100 marks the second proper release for CONTROL+, and this time we're given a far greater taste of its potential. The standard interface is impressive in delivering smooth, intuitive control, and lets you simultaneously

command multiple functions via inputs that mimic what you'd find in the cab of the real vehicle. As with 42099, there's also an alternative, simplified control system.

But here you also get a third control offering that lets you drag an illustration of the digging arm around, only to see the model repeat the movements. Then there's a superb 'visual coding' system that lets you program and save

multiple movement patterns without needing to learn a line of code. Hit a button, and 42100 carries out the programmed movements. You can equally simply record your own use of the Liebherr, which the app saves as a programmed movement sequence.

There's still no capacity to build custom control schemes from scratch, but CONTROL+ is looking a lot more enticing.



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fresh magazines, hot games,  
recent software, latest music releases.

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Cheap constant access to piping hot media  
Protect your downloadings from Big brother  
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18 years of seamless operation and our users' satisfaction

All languages  
Brand new content  
One site




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We have everything for all of your needs. Just open <https://avxlive.icu>






We took the Liebherr outside to see how it fares in its natural environment.

Words and Pics: Daniel Konstanski

# TESTING THE LIEBHERR'S LIMITS

We put the new CONTROL+ system through its paces with a series of rigorous, in-the-wild tests



We naively thought a bunch of loose bricks would max the Liebherr out.

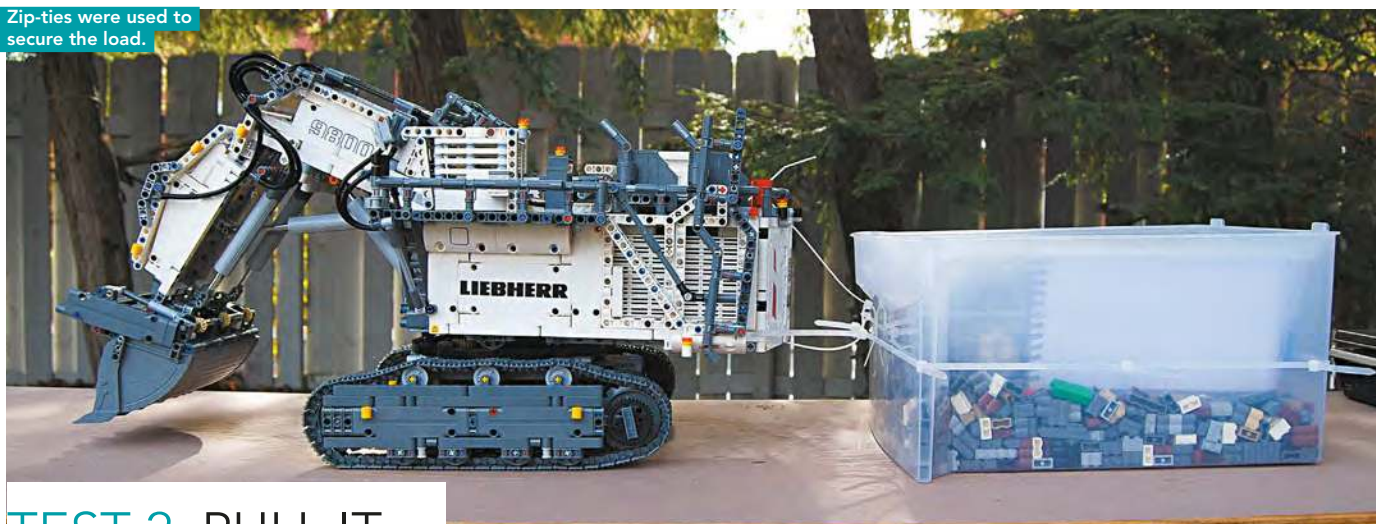
## TEST 1: PUSH IT

Thanks to the locations of their gearboxes, previous models similar in size to the Liebherr, like the Bucket Wheel Excavator, could barely propel their own weight. We thought a bucket of bricks would be enough to stop 42100 – we were wrong. Before long, we were scurrying around for rocks and bits of rubbish to pile on the load. Thanks to a dedicated motor and a design that distributes the weight of the model across the length of the treads, 42100 can push an astonishing 5.6kg across a level surface.





Zip-ties were used to secure the load.



## TEST 2: PULL IT

As heavy as the push weight was, the Liebherr had an even more impressive surprise in store when we flipped the load around. Using the same pile of random stuff that had just been pushed, we were surprised to find that the dozer could pull it with ease. It wasn't until an additional batch of rocks brought the total weight to 7.41kg that the dozer ground to a halt, unable to continue.

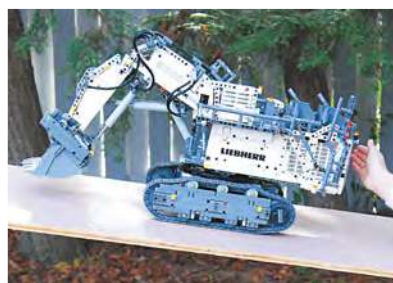


Rubber pegs on the treads would likely have increased the pulling capacity.

We didn't expect it to climb that steeply.



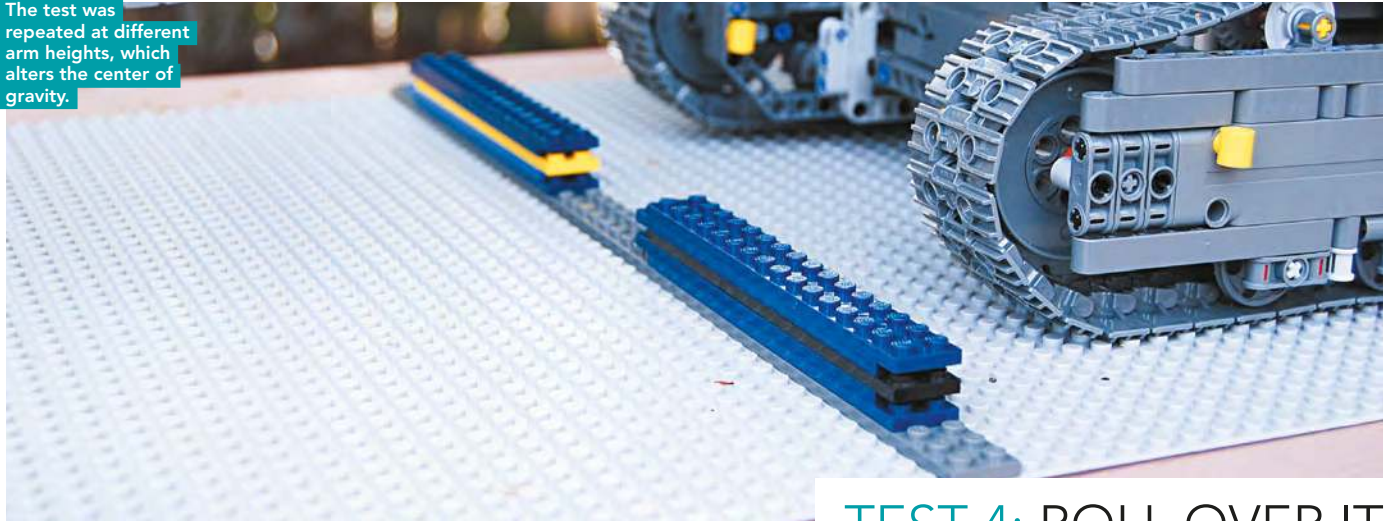
## TEST 3: CLIMB IT



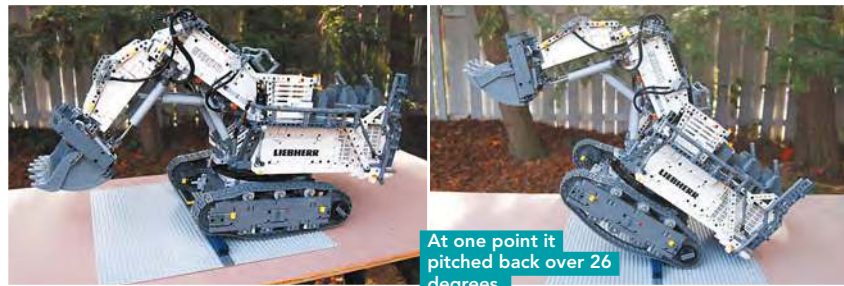
One of the cool features included in the CONTROL+ app, presumably tied to a sensor in the battery box that doubles as the model's brain, is an angle indicator. Tilt the Liebherr forward, backward, or side to side and two angle readouts change. We set the dozer driving and then slowly began raising the board it was on, watching the angle readout the whole time. With a hand at the ready in preparation for the inevitable slide, we watched the incline rise all the way to 25 degrees before the vehicle came to a stop.



The test was repeated at different arm heights, which alters the center of gravity.

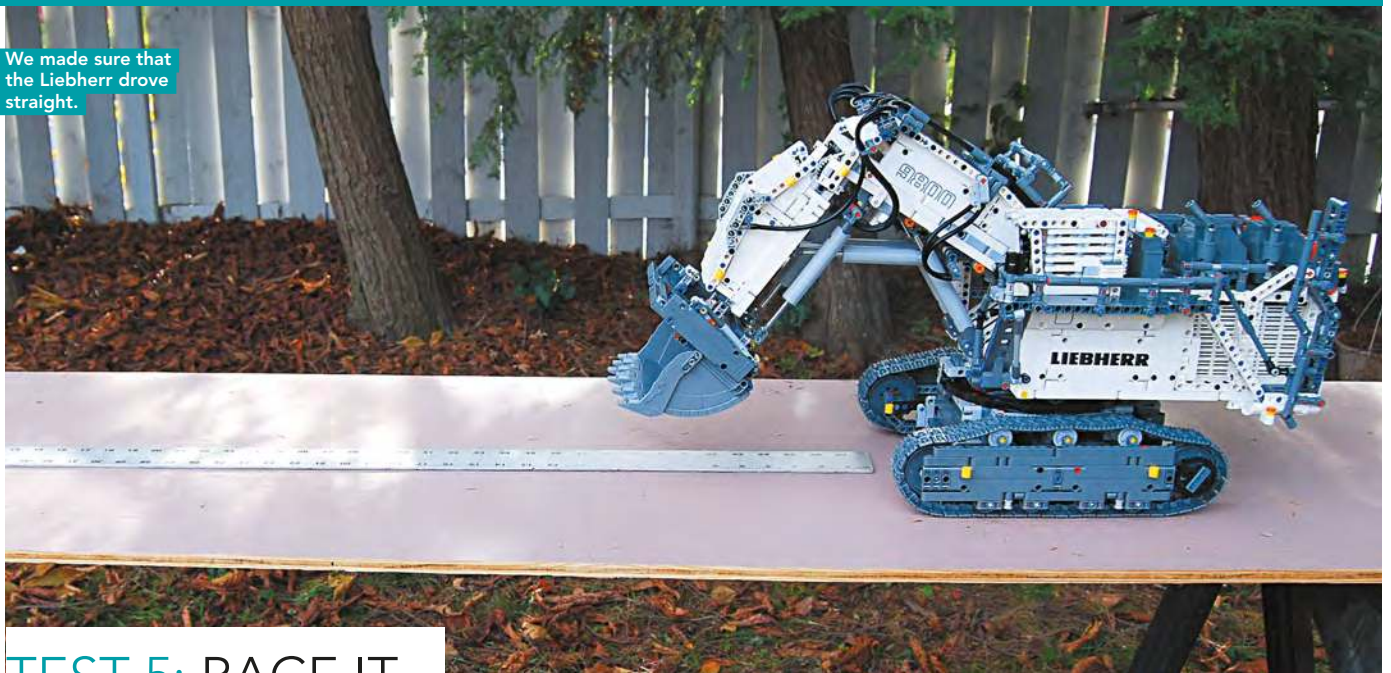


## TEST 4: ROLL OVER IT



Climbing a steady incline is one thing, but overcoming a sudden rise is something else. For our next test the team stacked LEGO plates in the Liebherr's path, creating an ever-taller obstacle for it to power over. With each additional plate, the rocking motion as it first climbed and then tipped over the bump became more pronounced, but it made it all the way up and over a full six plates before failing at seven. This equates to a height of 1.92cm.

We made sure that the Liebherr drove straight.



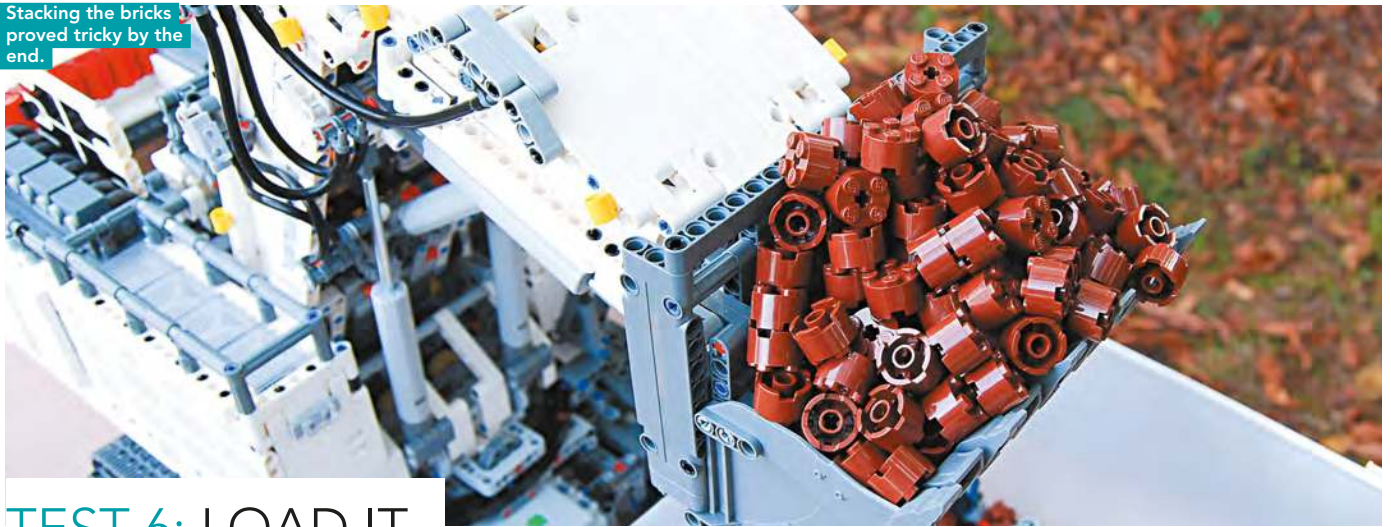
## TEST 5: RACE IT

The Liebherr will not win any speed awards. The previous tests have proved that the designers were clearly going for power above all else, so we weren't surprised to find that the model is slow as molasses. Its top speed is 0.05m/s. At that speed it would take 5.5 hours for it to drive 1km, not counting the time for battery change outs.





Stacking the bricks proved tricky by the end.



## TEST 6: LOAD IT

42100 comes with 100 2x2 round bricks to simulate a load for its bucket. However, there is still ample room once all those have been poured in. We delved into our supply of additional parts to load it up to capacity. In the end, we more than doubled the included amount, topping out at 280 of those bricks before they started just rolling off the stack.

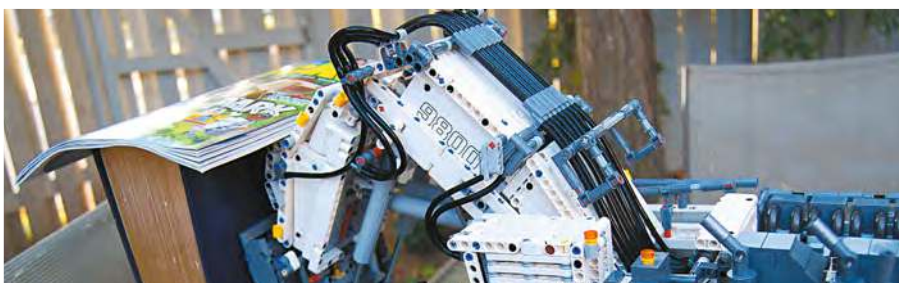
The final dump back into the bin was very satisfying.



A hand has to be placed on the back to keep the model from tipping.



## TEST 7: LIFT IT



Our final test determined how much weight the dozer arm could lift. We first found the optimum and strongest angle for the arm and bucket, which we then loaded with books and magazines. With much grating of gears, it tapped out under a Mark Twain anthology plus a copy of our own Blocks magazine, which together weighed in at 1.77kg.

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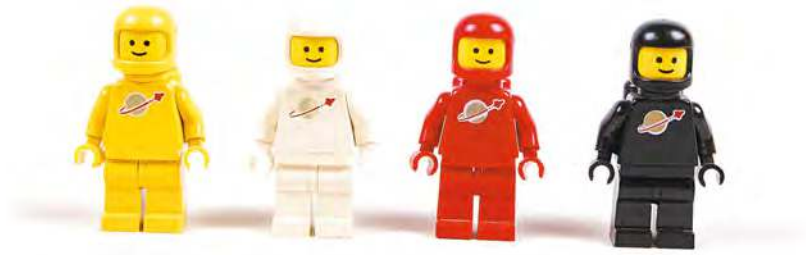
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# BUILDING BLOCKS

## THE HISTORY OF THE LEGO GROUP: THE 1980s

Kjeld Kirk Kristiansen's dream of making the LEGO Group 'more than just a toy company' defined his early years as CEO, with great success

**Words:** Daniel Konstanski **Pics:** The LEGO Group

**T**

HREE MAJOR EVENTS in 1978 and 1979 paved the way for the LEGO Group to rise to new heights during the 1980s: Kjeld Kirk Kristiansen being appointed CEO; his 'System within a System', which led to the launch of the Space and Castle themes, as well as the re-branding of the Town theme; and the creation of minifigures. All these served as the engine that launched the company into the upper atmosphere of success.

Kjeld also brought his personal vision to the company. As he put it: 'Our long-term aim is for the consumer to see the name LEGO as

synonymous with a company that manufactures and markets creative, quality toys, which promote the personal development of children of all ages.'

This has always been his view on the company's products – that the LEGO brick is more than just a simple toy. In fact, Kjeld prefers LEGO bricks to be called a 'play material'; a perspective that has caused some interesting discussions with other executives through the years.

Kjeld was the first member of the family to both lead the company and have formal training, with a degree in business management. Because of that, he brought a corporate mindset to the LEGO Group, which was exactly what was needed to expand in a sustainable way on the foundation that his father, Godtfred Kirk Christiansen, and grandfather Ole Kirk had built over the last several decades.

Godtfred had established beachheads across the globe. During the 1980s, Kjeld turned them into forward bases from which rapid



Kjeld Kirk Kristiansen in 1989.

expansion towards world domination could occur. All the while, he was also building up the company's internal infrastructure to support that rapid expansion. He was well aware of the legacy he carried: on August 13, 1982, the LEGO Group celebrated its 50th anniversary.

Unlike many corporations, the LEGO Group grew not through acquisitions, but organically. Thanks to Kjeld's System within a System concept, the product line was reborn. That rebirth had two dimensions, all derived from the strategy of market segmentation. First, the company's LEGO toys were divided by age groups, with each targeted through its own individual marketing.

The goal was to move kids through the various age-appropriate categories, so that they – or more accurately their parents – remained buyers throughout their childhoods, as well as ensure that the children had the best possible play experience. There was DUPLO for the youngest hands, System for kids during their grade school years, and finally Technic and other advanced models for the oldest demographic.

Then, within these age divisions, the product lines were divided into themes, so kids with different interests could find something specific to their particular passions. Fabuland served as a bridge between DUPLO and other System products, and was also the LEGO Group's first attempt at formal storytelling. Space and Castle transported a generation of kids

## COMMUNICATING THE LEGO IDEA AND COMPANY TO A HOST OF NEW FACES WAS A CHALLENGE

to exotic locations from long ago or far away, with Town carrying on as the spiritual successor of the old Town Plan line.

Technic formalised into its own product line, and then experimented with subthemes such as arctic exploration, figures, and ever-increasing levels of complexity and motorisation. DUPLO expanded dramatically to feature zoos, circuses, homes, and more. Less than a decade after Zero Year, when the product line had gone so stale that it nearly led to a financial catastrophe, the plethora of toys was almost unrecognisable. The Billund team were at the top of their game. By the end of the decade, the four core themes of Town, Space, Castle and Pirate would all be in place. Many sets from each of these lines would go on to become holy grails, sought after by collectors even to this day.

As the popularity of the company's toys grew, sales exploded. Income tripled over just four years, from DKK 800 million in 1979 to DKK 2.1 billion during 1983. By 1984, it is estimated that LEGO sets were present in 80 million households worldwide. This inevitably led to the need for increased production, so the LEGO Group expanded its facilities in Denmark, and opened new factories in South Africa, Switzerland, South Korea, and Brazil. Production and sales growth naturally necessitated more employees in turn. During 1979, 2,500 employees worked for the LEGO Group. By 1983, that number reached 3,700. Just two years later it would be 5,000, with more added by the turn of the decade.

Those kinds of numbers brought with them a clear challenge. The LEGO Group had, for its entire existence up to this point, been a family-owned company that in many ways still operated as if it were a small



The LEGO Factory in Kunpo, South Korea.



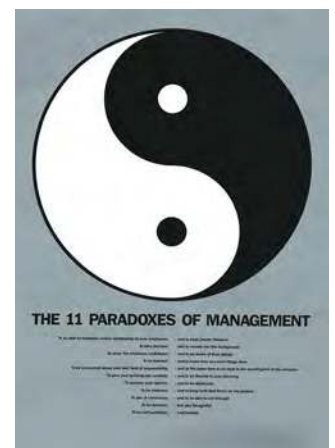
local entity, even years after that had stopped being true. Employee counts in the thousands, not hundreds, introduced issues that Kjeld tackled head-on.

A primary challenge was how to communicate the LEGO Idea and company values to a host of new faces. The young CEO's answer was a series of initiatives that began as the LEGO Universe Partners (LUP) seminars. These seminars sought to impart the values and attitudes of the LEGO Group's culture to these new employees. Deemed a success, the one-time seminars were turned into a leadership course called the IMD Experience. IMD would grow to cover ideals, strategy, organisational structure, market situation and the LEGO Idea. All of it was part of Kjeld's dream of making the LEGO Group something more than just a toy company, as he stated in 1988 in what would become known as 'The LEGO Vision'.

'In my vision – in my dream – the LEGO name is associated not only with our products and with the company,' he explained. 'And it is not limited within the confines of specific goals and strategies. The LEGO name has become something universal – a concept that can be defined by the words 'Idea', 'exuberance' and 'values'.'

Kjeld's ideals would take deep root within the ethos of the LEGO Group, becoming entwined within its very fibres. While this would accomplish the mission of providing the company with a shared ideal that employees could be proud of, it would prove to have some unintended consequences in the late 1990s, when the LEGO Group's fortunes turned and the company was slow to recognise it was in a fight

Kjeld Kirk Kristiansen introduced the 11 Paradoxes of Management in 1985.







Space proved a very popular theme.



The LEGO factory in Manaus, Brazil.



for survival.

That goal, to make the LEGO Group something more than just a toy company, primed Kjeld for his own version of the chance meeting between his father and the buyer who sparked the idea for the System in Play decades earlier. The tale began with Kjeld watching a TV interview with Seymour Papert, a professor of Learning Research at MIT. Papert was a distinguished voice within the emerging field of studying how children learn, authoring a book called *Mindstorms: Children, Computers and Powerful Ideas*, and developing an educational programming language called LOGO.

Seymour Papert was one of the early pioneers in a field of educational theory called constructionism, which marries tactile creation and learning with kids developing mental models to understand the world around them. While listening to the interview, Kjeld immediately drew similarities between the LEGO System in Play and what the distinguished professor was describing. Soon thereafter, he made contact with Seymour who, it turned out, had wanted to meet Kjeld for a long time, having already made a similar connection between the potential synergies of his methods and the LEGO brick.

In 1989, the two men formed a partnership. Seymour Papert was named LEGO Professor of Learning Research, known today as the Professor of Play, at MIT. Furthermore, LEGO Futura, the company's development division that had been established decades earlier, opened

## ■ ■ THE LEGO GROUP WAS IN EXACTLY THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME IN THE CULTURAL ZEITGEIST ■ ■

an office near MIT to facilitate streamlined communication between the two entities. Their first project was marrying Seymour's programming language with LEGO elements, so that kids could make them move and respond to sensors. It would become an early forerunner to the Mindstorms product, which would derive its name from the Professor of Play's book. There remains a Professor of Play to this day.

By the end of the 1980s, the LEGO Group had sales offices in over 125 countries, on every continent across the globe (bar Antarctica). The company was well and truly transformed. Scaling the product line to figures – both DUPLO and standard minifigures – had allowed for a level of playability never before possible. This consistency, paired with the release of themes, resulted in the LEGO Group being in exactly the right place at the right time in the cultural zeitgeist.

The 1980s gave way to an explosion of roleplaying toy lines, many tied to Saturday morning cartoons. Kids were hungry for themes, from Ninja Turtles to G.I. Joe and beyond. Despite not having a TV show to market them, the LEGO Group's lines of toys – with their exciting and exotic locations populated by a host of minifigures – allowed for the same type of play, while having the added feature of construction. Kjeld's push for the LEGO Group to create developmentally-friendly toys also made the products appeal to parents, who even then were looking for alternatives to the violence endemic in cartoons, and the perceived brainlessness of videogames.

Kjeld's vision was becoming a reality. Little did the company know, however, that these successful strategies were secretly inserting a crack into the foundation, which would cause a near-catastrophic split in the final years of the next decade. ■





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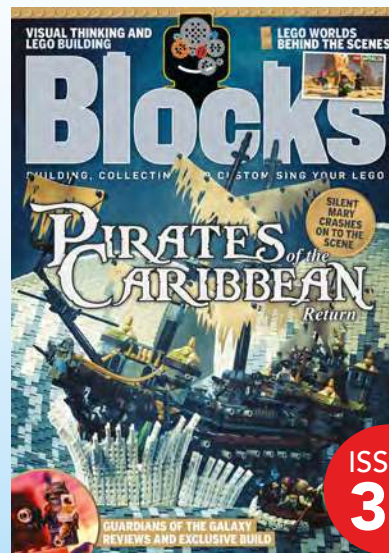
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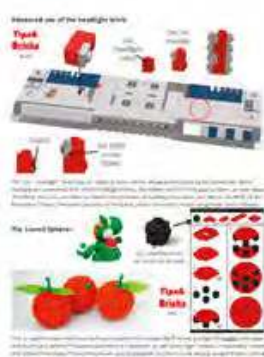
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Where LEGO is concerned, the high street is thriving.





# MAKING A LEGO LIVING

How LEGO fans are turning their hobby into a high street business

Words: Chris Wharfe Pics: Chris Wharfe, Dave Kirkham, Mark Hunnam, Julia Hunnam



Minifigs & Bricks employee Lauren sorts through a newly-acquired collection.

**D**EDICATING AN ENTIRE retail store to LEGO bricks might seem like a foolhardy endeavour in the 21st century. Everywhere you look, headlines insist the high street is dying a slow death, while online marketplaces already offer everything from individual parts and minifigures right through to complete sets. But that hasn't stopped a few keen LEGO fans from giving it a go anyway. And against all odds, they're flourishing.

'The shop started as a way for other LEGO minifigure collectors to come and buy my duplicates,' says Dave Kirkham, owner of Minifigs & Bricks. 'I'm lucky to have other businesses, so this is very much a hobby business that has got out of control.'

Dave's LEGO story spins a tale that will be familiar to many AFOLs: he played with bricks into his teens, gave them up for a while – his dark age – and came back to them when he discovered 928 Space Cruiser and Moonbase in his loft. And in a twist that most of us will have





Minifigs & Bricks has plenty of regular customers.

experienced at one time or another, his instincts to sell the set were met with immediate regret.

‘This was around 2010,’ he recalls. ‘I started buying up Classic Space sets like it was going out of fashion so that I could build a full collection, as I think they are the most amazing sets even today. At the same time I discovered the blind-bagged minifigure series and just got the bug to get them all.’

Where most people turn to eBay, Facebook Marketplace or online forums to trade or sell their surplus Collectible Minifigures, Dave instead decided to open a physical shop – much to the chagrin of his wife. ‘The LEGO shop used to be my wife’s office, but she was off with morning sickness when we started a family approximately seven years ago,’ Dave explains. ‘Whilst she was off for a week, I decided it would be a good idea to move all her stuff out and build a LEGO shop. This went down

## ■ ■ YOU HAVE TO OFFER SOMETHING INDIVIDUAL OR DIFFERENT TO ESTABLISH YOUR OWN PLACE IN THE MARKET ■ ■

like a proverbial tonne of bricks a week later when she came back to work.

‘Initially I thought it would be a good idea to set this up for a three-month period, simply as somewhere my 10,000 Facebook followers could potentially come to. Clearly it exceeded its life expectancy, and now nearly eight years later we keep coming up with new ideas.’

The shop is actually the smallest physical part of Dave’s thriving enterprise. Walk through the door to Minifigs & Bricks’ premises in north York, and a left turn will take you into a tiny room lined with minifigures, polybags, sets and out-of-box models, all of which are available to buy. Head right, though, and you’ll enter an enormous LEGO emporium, in which Dave and his team host regular brick-based events – from kids’ birthday parties to stag dos. On the day we visit, bricks are strewn everywhere, as part-time employee Lauren is busy

Dave originally opened his shop as a way to sell off his spare Collectible Minifigures.



Brick By Brick in Harrogate, North York





sorting through Dave's latest haul.

'Selling new box sets isn't the core of our business,' Dave explains. 'We simply can't compete with the big chains or supermarkets selling a new box, so we don't try to.' Instead, Dave sources predominantly second-hand LEGO from people selling job lots, then sorts and cleans the individual bricks.

'At the beginning of this journey I developed a product to help us clean and sterilise all LEGO at 30 degrees through a washing machine. My goal was to come up with a way to recycle the LEGO people didn't want any more, so that it didn't end up in landfill. So that's what we did. It means every single brick that comes through us has been checked by hand to make sure it isn't damaged, faded or chewed, and then it goes through our cleaning and sterilisation process.'

Once it's been thoroughly inspected and sorted, the LEGO is then

**■ ■ WE SIMPLY CAN'T COMPETE WITH THE BIG CHAINS OR SUPERMARKETS SELLING A NEW BOX, SO WE DON'T TRY TO ■ ■**

put up for sale in the shop, or used for Minifigs & Bricks' increasingly popular events.

'We were constantly being asked to do birthday parties,' Dave recalls. 'So, three years ago we bit the bullet, researched the concept and created our own unique mix of party activities, each lasting 20 minutes – from exercises using the mosaic wall and building gravity racers, to building the tallest tower and imagination games. The feedback we get is tremendous.'

'The adult parties are different, more based around a social build event – building themed sets the birthday person particularly likes, or collaborating on a larger build, which they can get through within the timeframe working together. These are all hosted in our studio space, which has now become a pay-to-play area when parties are not on. Any time we are open, people can come in and free-build from the brick pits >





## LEGO LIVING

Dave's shop is full of rare and collectable LEGO.

or choose a set to build. This is really popular in the week with adults who like to come and chill out, get a coffee and build a set.'

Dave describes his business as a 'destination store' that LEGO fans have to 'discover for themselves' – he doesn't sell anything online – and the parties and pay-to-play activities feel like an extension of that ethos. If nothing else, expanding his brand beyond just selling bricks seems like a savvy move in the face of heavy competition from online outlets, and even other retailers doing similar things.

Indeed, Dave's approach to selling LEGO is clearly doing the business, so it's no surprise to find that it's been echoed by others. An hour's drive west will take you to Mark and Julia Hannam's Harrogate-based LEGO

## PEOPLE THINK IT'S A FAST BUCK, WHEN IN REALITY IT IS LIKE ANY OTHER BUSINESS

shop, Brick By Brick, where you'll find a similar focus on selling second-hand bricks – alongside other LEGO novelties.

'We predominantly sell pre-owned LEGO, as we found more people preferred this to new, although we do try to stock a small range of new sets, as well as the Collectible Minifigures,' Mark says. 'We also have our own range of LEGO jewellery and LEGO-based gifts.'

Like Dave, the Hannams' decision to go into selling bricks was driven first and foremost by a passion for the plastic. 'I wanted to do something completely different to my previous career as an automotive engineer, and have always had a love for LEGO since I was a young boy,' Mark explains. 'Our shop became vacant so we took the opportunity to turn

my passion for LEGO into a business.'

Where the two shops differ, though, is in their demographics. While Dave proudly admits around 80% of his customers are adults, Mark and Julia's shop hews more heavily towards the LEGO Group's primary target audience. 'Our local target demographic is mainly children, as we work quite closely with the local schools,' he elaborates, but notes that the shop also has a 'die-hard group of adults' who have become regular customers.

Brick By Brick may be more retail-focused, but the Hannams have dipped their toes into events too. 'Last year we held a very successful minifigure trail, including many of the local attractions as points to visit,' Mark says. 'Upon completion of the trail, children and adults were able to claim their medals in-store.' While Minifigs & Bricks really is a destination store, insofar as you're unlikely to stumble across it without seeking it out yourself, Brick By Brick's location in Pateley Bridge has the benefit of footfall from visitors to the wider village.

'The summer months are always busier for us as we're in a tourist town,' Mark confirms. 'There are several local caravan parks that open March to October, so they're definitely our busier months.'

From Brick By Brick, a 75-minute drive south will take you to Sheffield's Bricks and Bits, an independent toy shop that just happens to be run by one of the UK's foremost AFOLs, Michael LeCount. You might recognise his name from incredulous news headlines over the years, mostly about his purchase of a second home to house his collection. In 2015, Michael opened his own shop, partly to shift some of that growing mass of sets.

'As I got more and more surplus I started selling at events and shows, and the idea of opening a toy shop was an inevitable progression,' he recalls. 'There was a small shop in our area where I used to say to my



# HOW TO MARKET A LEGO SHOP

## Getting the word out is key to success in the retail world

'We invest all our spare income in advertising, from attending events and giving out leaflets, to regular leaflet drops across the city and promoting ourselves online and in magazines,' Dave explains. 'There's no silver bullet to marketing. You just have to be persistent and seen regularly in the same places. We rely heavily on everyone having a great experience with us, and then telling others about what we do and why we are different to any other shops.'



children that I could open a toy shop. When the opportunity came along for this to be a possibility I decided I didn't want to miss the chance and regret it in the future.'

Like Dave and Mark, Michael also sources his stock from local collectors, but unlike Yorkshire's other physical LEGO shops, Bricks and Bits deals in more than just the Danish giant's products. Alongside LEGO sets, you'll also find Playmobil, Timberkits and other construction toys lining the store's shelves – so it makes sense that Michael doesn't view Sheffield's official LEGO Store as a competitor.

'We both stock LEGO but we offer different products unique to our own shops,' he clarifies. 'As with any independent retailer you have to offer something individual or different to establish your own place in the market.' If you can crack that chestnut, though, Michael is confident anyone can succeed on the high street. 'If you get the location and shop right there is no reason why you shouldn't be successful. I think that independent retailers can offer something that most of the larger stores can't, particularly a personalised and knowledgeable service.'

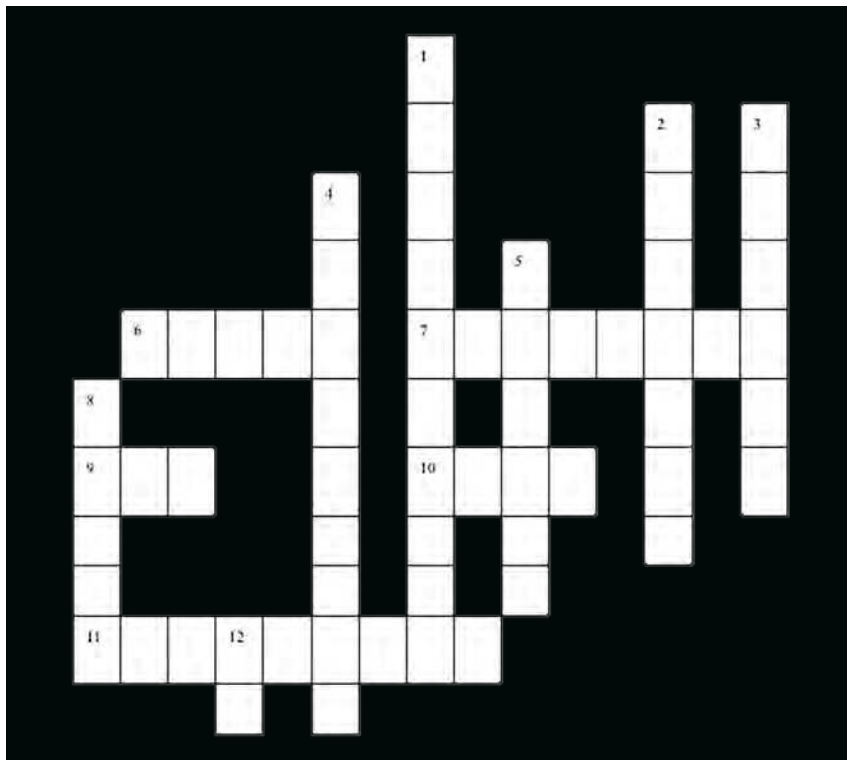
It's that thorough understanding of LEGO that underlines the approach to all three of these physical shops: their owners are fans first, retailers second. And if you're thinking about making your own LEGO living on the high street, Dave warns that that product expertise is an essential ingredient to the recipe of a successful physical shop. 'People think it's a fast buck, when in reality it is like any other business,' he says. 'You need to understand the product inside out and have a passion for it. If you're doing this as something you think is a way to make a fast buck, you aren't going to last long.'

If you have the brick knowledge and the business nous, though, Dave, Mark, Julia and Michael's efforts are proof that for LEGO fans, the high street definitely isn't dead. ■



# BLOCKSWORD

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## Across

6. Speed Champions is now this many studs wide (5)  
 7. Classic animal-based theme (8)  
 9. BBC show endorsing Technic set, first word (3)  
 10. BBC show endorsing Technic set, second word (4)  
 11. Rising in cinemas (9)

## Down

1. 40-something-year-old LEGO person (10)  
 2. Build three models for the price of one (7)  
 3. Not visible side (6)  
 4. The ultimate bat-ride (9)  
 5. Star Wars director with two Js (6)  
 8. Four on a 2x2 brick (5)  
 12. Tea-drinking Sensei (2)



"Apparently, Instead of going for a walk, he wants us to stay in and play with our LEGO blocks."

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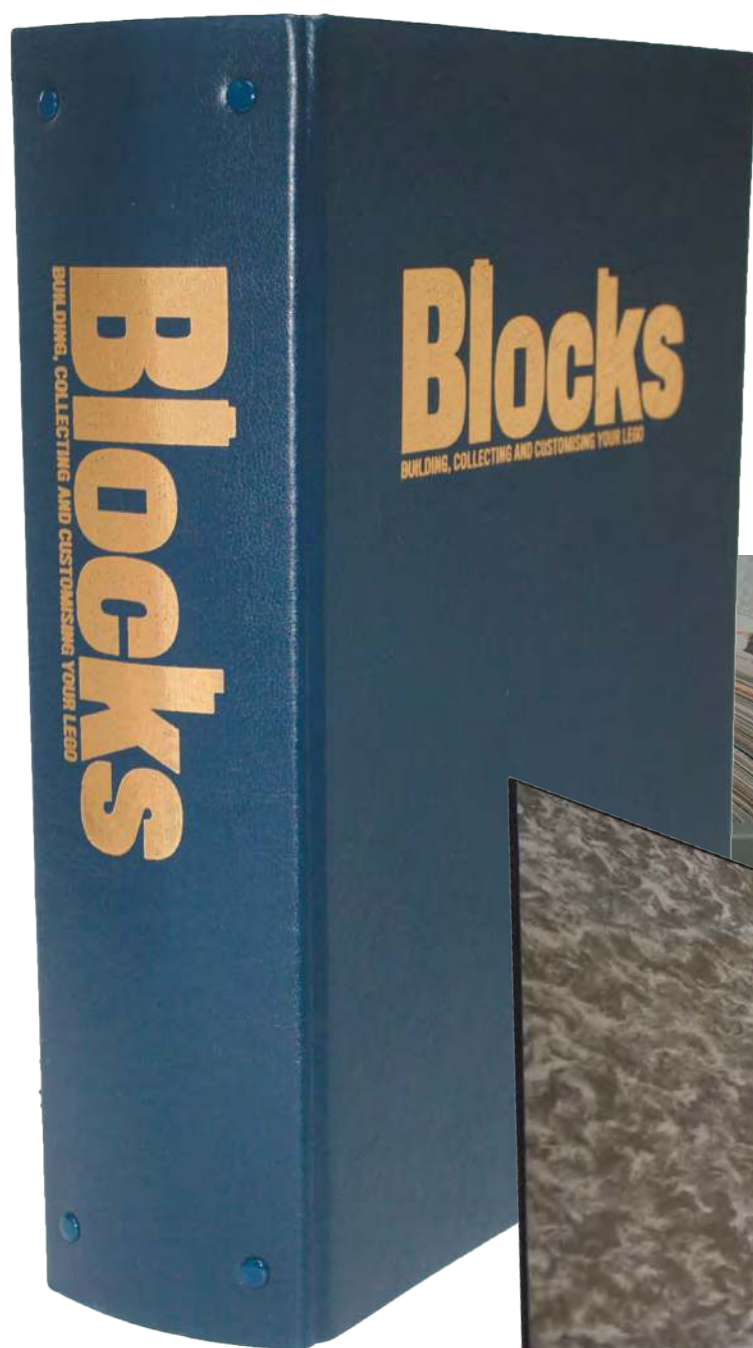
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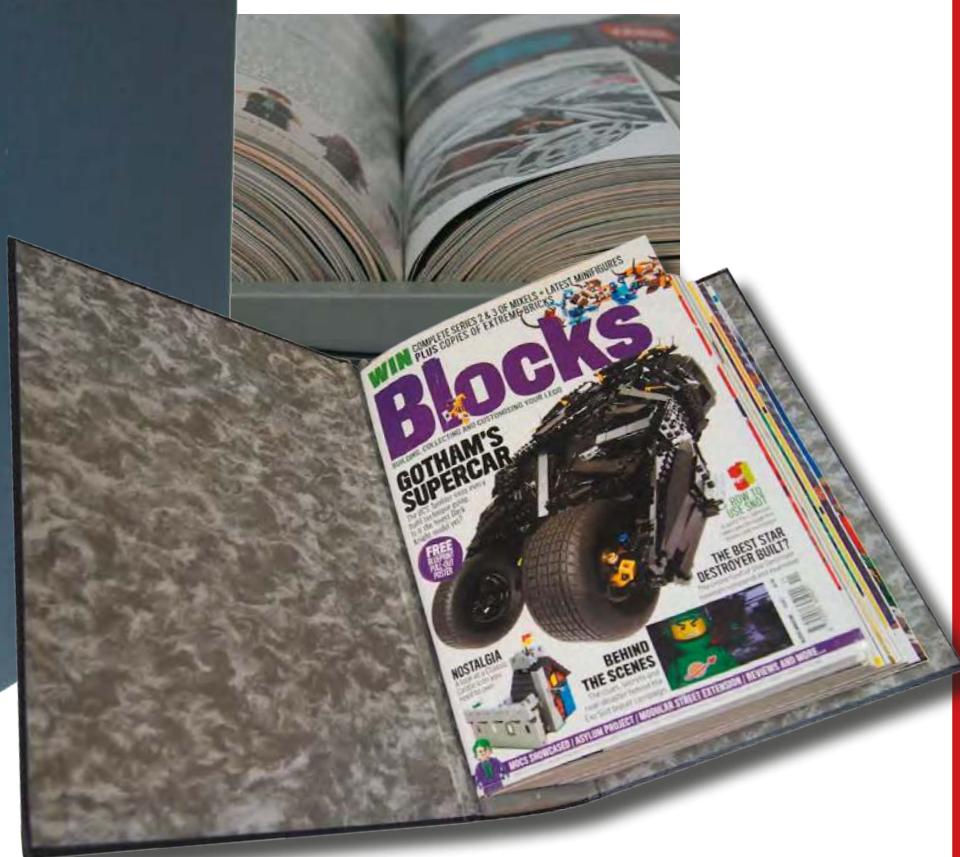
Answers  
 Across: 6) Fabuland, 9) Top, 10) Gear, 11) Skywalker  
 Down: 1) Minifigure, 2) Creator, 3) Hidden, 4) Abrams, 8) Studs, 12) Wu



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Words and Pics: Simon Pickard

# PIECING TOGETHER PILLARS

Learn how to keep your buildings upright with these techniques for constructing sturdy pillars







## KEY



1X1 BRICK



1X1 PLATE



1X2 TECHNIC BRICK



1X8 TILE



2X2 JUMPER PLATE



DALEK



TECHNIC PIN WITH STUD

ROSS

**P**ILLARS TURN UP in a surprisingly large number of building themes. While they may typically be associated with historical builds, they can also turn up in the far reaches of space. This guide to building pillars will provide a variety of sizes and styles, going beyond the basic stacking of bricks or plates.

## TWISTING THE BASICS

The obvious way to create pillars is to build a stack of round or square bricks and plates. These should never be overlooked as they are strong and often look perfectly fine. Even within this classic approach, you can add a quite literal twist to give your design a more ornate appearance.

This first approach is simply making sure that each piece is not perfectly straight as you progress up. If you keep the offset going in the same direction at every level, then you will eventually end up with the spiralled look you can see in the examples here.

Because the 2x2 jumper plate has a central stud on a square base, it is possible to utilise the same principle of twisting, giving the most effective spiralled pillar possible.

## KEY CONCEPT

Offsetting connections is an ideal way of creating texture in any model. While the example here relies on identical pieces with a one-stud connection, it is possible to alternate both the kinds of pieces used and even the size of the piece by using tiles to eliminate all but one stud each time.

- 1 – Each brick or plate is placed at a slight offset.
- 2 – The 2x2 jumper plate creates a central point for a twisted pillar.







### ADVANCED PILLARS

Getting away from the basic stacking structure allows for more intricate and detailed pillar structures. It also gives a much wider variety of size options to achieve the right thickness for the design.

Each of these pillars works using common techniques. Five plates stacked is the same distance as two studs positioned vertically, so by inserting two plates between bricks, tiles can then be attached to the side of the central column.

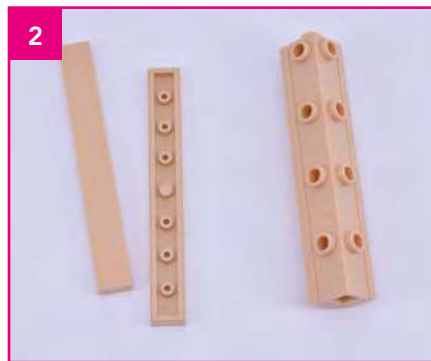
### SMALL PILLARS

The smallest pillar option uses dalek pieces to create the 1x1-sized connection points needed on all four sides of the pillar. The tiles connected to the central core then create a small pillar shape, which still has connections at the top and bottom.

It's worth noting that it's not necessary to connect the tiles on the sides in perfect alignment. The small tubes on the underside of plates and tiles will fit inside the stud hole, allowing the connection to be offset, which can be useful when applying such designs to unusual areas and shaping options.

### DEVELOPING THE CONCEPT

It is also useful to note that using different coloured pieces will then show up through the sides. This idea can be used on corner areas, using new elements that have fewer studs on the sides.



3

- 1 – The central core uses a repetition of two plates and a dalek.
- 2 – Tiles are added to the outside of the core.
- 3 – A small column.

■ ■ ■ **ALTERNATIVE  
ELEMENTS CAN  
PROVIDE NEW  
CONNECTION  
OPTIONS AND TWISTS  
FOR A SPECIFIC  
DESIGN** ■ ■ ■

## MEDIUM PILLARS

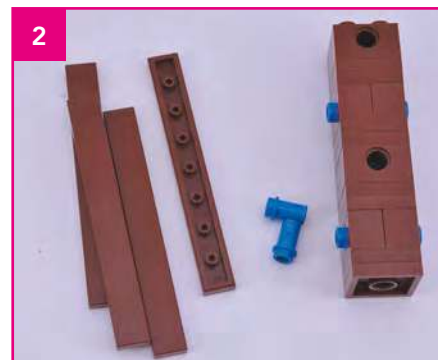
Something similar to the small pillar can be achieved with a 2x2 core structure. The core uses Technic bricks, into which Technic pins with studs are inserted to provide the central connection point for the tile.

For this one, each layer of Technic bricks should alternate, so the Technic pins can be at alternating sides. Otherwise, it will not be possible to attach tiles to all four sides.

This example uses 1x8 tiles, as anything shorter will end up with tiles only connected to one stud. Shorter tiles are not ideal because of that innate weakness, but it's not a huge problem because they will stay in place reasonably well. Once the tiles are in place, the column looks more rounded.

## DEVELOPING THE CONCEPT

It's possible to make use of the weak connection that comes with smaller tiles to give pillars a broken or textured look. The Technic hole connection also allows for other types of connecting items, like clips, which allow for a range of shaped sides to the pillar that might look better for industrial buildings.

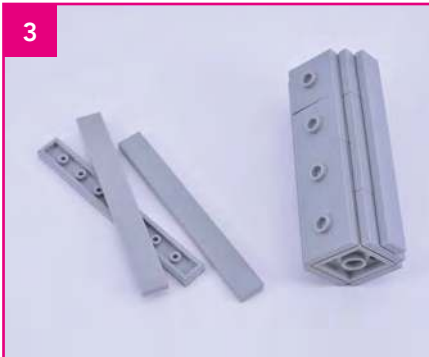
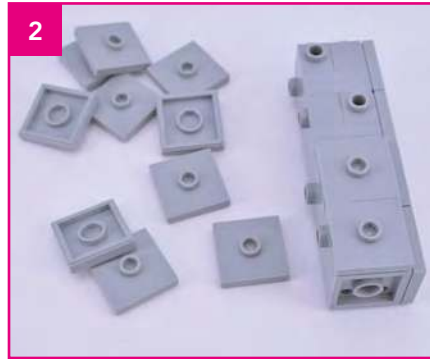


- 1 - The central core repeats using two Technic bricks and two 2x2 plates.
- 2 - The Technic brick holes need to alternate up the core.
- 3 - Tiles are added to the central part using tech pins with studs.
- 4 - A medium column.



**OFFSETTING CONNECTIONS IS AN IDEAL WAY OF CREATING TEXTURE IN ANY MODEL**





### LARGE PILLAR

The final design concept expands the width of the previous one, while still using the same 2x2 core design. It can take a more rounded shape due to the increased width.

This core structure uses standard side stud pieces again. The ross brick is used, but rotated each time, so that one stud shows on each of the four sides. The stud is also switched from left to right for each layer, ensuring that the side panels will have a secure attachment.

2x2 jumper plates are attached to this central structure. It is also possible to use 1x2 jumper plates. The tiles will hold any plates in place that are not connected directly to the core structure. This is useful when building shorter columns or adding colour changes or textures.

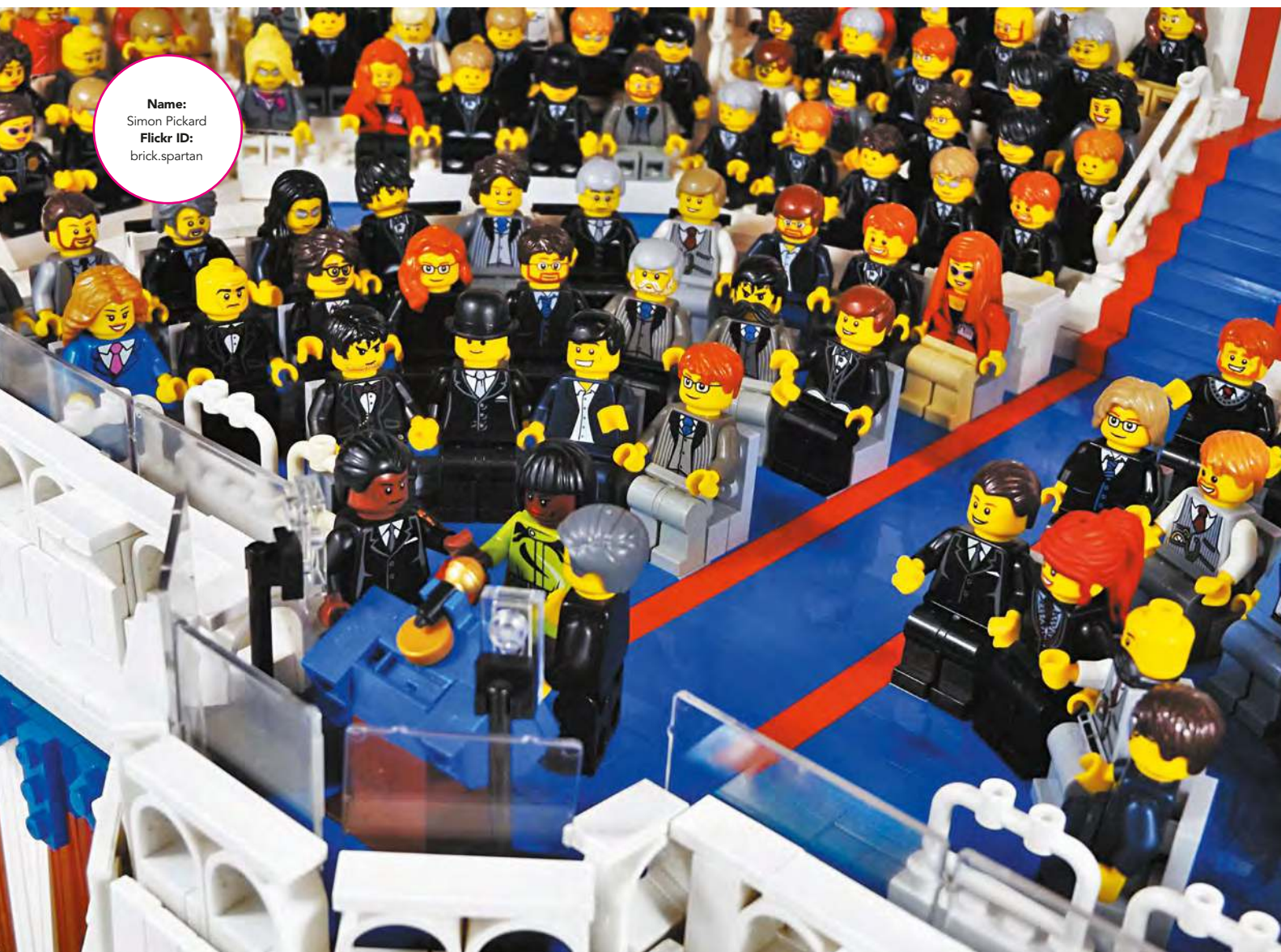
### DEVELOPING THE CONCEPT

This final pillar option offers the greatest array of connection points possible. Alternative elements can provide new connection options and twists for a specific design. ■



- 1 – Repeating levels of two 2x2 plates and four ross bricks.
- 2 – Some of the jumper plates can be subbed with 2x2 tiles.
- 3 – Tiles now clasp to the jumper plates.
- 4 – A large column.





Name:  
Simon Pickard  
Flickr ID:  
brick.spartan

# MICROPHONE

Some pieces can serve their function while serving a secondary purpose

Words: Simon Pickard Pics: Laurens Parsons

**WHILE PIECES ARE** often cleverly hidden inside models to provide integral support, this example shows a piece performing a seemingly normal function of its shape – while also holding a secret function.

The microphone is being used for its obviously correct purpose in this scene recreating President Barack Obama's inauguration, but it is actually also providing essential support to the gold round tile immediately beneath it.

Building small items is always tricky, and provides great lessons to builders challenging

themselves to use the pieces at hand. When building the lectern for this scene there were several angles needed to generate the correct

**THE MICROPHONE IS NOT SITTING PERFECTLY IN PLACE, BUT IS SLIGHTLY ANGLED**

size and shape.

Unfortunately I found that the key emblem on the front of the lectern could not be

attached to a stud due to the need for hinge pieces where it appears on the real thing. In order to secure it in place, I simply attached the microphone over the top of the round tile.

The microphone is not sitting perfectly in place, but is slightly angled so it can grip against the gold tile and hold it in place on the model. This technique allows for the finished look to appear perfectly ordinary, while discreetly solving a difficult connection problem.

When struggling with a tricky build technique, it's always good to bear in mind that neighbouring elements might just be able to help out. ■



# RETIRED PIECE:

# SPACESHIP CANOPY

Introduced as part of the new era of Space sets at the close of the classic era; 2507 went on to become a mainstay of '90s LEGO sci-fi products

Words and Pics: Daniel Konstanski

**C**LASSIC SPACE CAME to an abrupt end with the close of the 1980s, and a new era of products was born. Gone were the factionless sets held together by various common colour schemes, and in their place rose a cycle of branded teams with uniform figures, styles and allegiances. To help visually distinguish new from old, the LEGO Group introduced a host of elements; chief among them 2507.

Everything about this canopy screams sci-fi, from the colours and length to the shape and angles. While 2507 did find a few uses in the Town theme, half of them were in futuristic subthemes like Extreme Team and Res-Q. The Spaceship Cockpit, as it came to be known, lived up to its name across a host of sets, and

surely thousands of early X-wing MOCs before more movie realistic elements were introduced to the market.

Canopies such as this one were an important part of '90s style sets, not just because of the types of vehicles it facilitated, but due to its vibrant colours. Factions in Space and Aquazone were defined by a base brick colour paired with a transparent colour. M-Tron was defined by red and neon green. Aquanauts, yellow and transparent dark blue. Space Police I, black and dark red. The list goes on.

Usage of 2507 was not very creative over its run; this is an element that is intended to do a single job and do it well. It protected the pilots of spacecraft both large and small. The closest that designers came to pushing the

limits was sometimes using it as the hatch for a vehicle's rear compartment opening in the back. Well over 75% of sets that included it hail from Space, with Aquazone as the runner-up. Within that limited window, however, it saw wide usage, from sets as small as Alpha Team Helicopter that could be purchased for pocket change, all the way up to the Unifon Monorail, which held the title of most expensive System set for over a decade.

In the end, Star Wars was the likely undoing of 2507. Despite being a sci-fi piece, it did not match up with any of the canopies seen on spacecraft in a galaxy far, far away. Elements that could cross-pollinate soon took over, pushing the beloved window into retirement soon after the new millennium. ■

**Number:** 2507

**Official Name:** Windscreen 10x4x2 1/3 Canopy

**Unofficial Name:** The Spaceship Cockpit Window

**No. Sets Included In:** 44

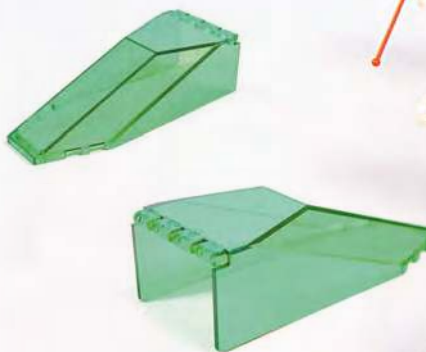
**No. Colour Variants:** Seven, plus an additional five printed versions

**Years Produced:** 1989-2001

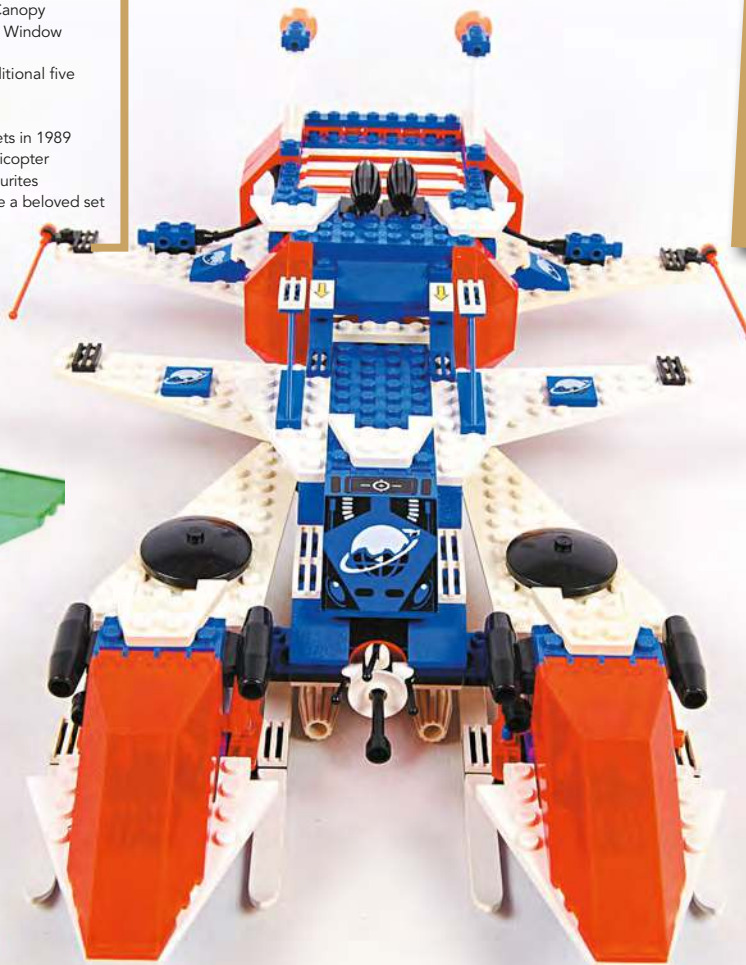
**First Appearance:** Four Space Police I Sets in 1989

**Final Appearance:** 6773 Alpha Team Helicopter

**Why We Miss It:** Found in many fan favourites throughout the '90s, many AFOLs can cite a beloved set that included it.



Cool colours were very appropriate for the decade.



The canopy saw wide use across sci-fi themes during the '90s.

Printed variants added another level of detail.



# MARY POPPINS CHERRY TREE LANE

Guillaume Roussel takes us for a stroll down memory lane – sorry, Cherry Tree Lane – with his ode to a classic Disney film

**Words:** Chris Wharfe **Pics:** Guillaume Roussel, Il Buono, GabKremo



## INFO

**Ideas ID:**

Disneybrick55

**Project:**

<https://tinyurl.com/sv2aysz>



Guillaume's project captures everything memorable about Mary Poppins.

IT'S LIKE A SPIDER WEB – A PAGE SHARES YOUR PROJECT, AND THEN SEVERAL PEOPLE SHARE IT

**M**ARY POPPINS IS among Disney's most enduring films, with a legacy that's inspired countless movies and parodies, and even spawned a spin-off and sequel all its own. The character returned to cinema screens in last year's *Mary Poppins Returns*, which was a resounding success by any metric – proving Hollywood's most famous nanny (sorry, Mrs. Doubtfire) is still alive and well in the public consciousness. Now, French builder Guillaume Roussel is hoping to capitalise on the classic property's popularity with his stunning Ideas project.

**Blocks:** What inspired you to create Cherry Tree Lane?

**Guillaume:** As you can see on my Ideas profile, I try to add a Disney touch to every project

that I create. I wanted to create something special; something different that the LEGO Group hasn't produced in the past. So I asked myself: 'What type of Disney set would people love to have?' I remembered the Nautilus project based on *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, and decided to realise a project based on another famous movie, *Mary Poppins*, which had incredible success in 1964. *Mary Poppins* is a very colourful movie, which mixes classic movies and musical comedy, so I was thinking that a set based on this universe would be a great idea.

**Can you talk us through the design?**

The design is only inspired by the first movie. At first I didn't know how to make this project, because in the movie there are so many places like streets, the park, the bank, houses... so I watched the most popular scenes of the

movie several times, to conclude that the best way was to build not only the house or not only the park, but both. The project is divided into three parts: the road, the park where people fly kites, and the buildings. To keep the project to a maximum of 3,000 parts, I decided to realise two of these buildings like a movie set – so just the main side, and nothing at the back. The house in the middle is real, and contains a lot of details like the living room, stairs and Banks children's bedrooms. Like in the movie, the road is not straight, but curved – I think that this configuration is better, because it is not usual if you compare it with modular buildings, for example.

**Who is your main target audience for this project?**

The main target is the AFOL community, and fans of Disney who like this movie, but not





only them. You can imagine that the street and buildings can be part of a city next to modular buildings, for example. It's also a great set for children, because there are a lot of features and playability, especially in the house of the Banks family.

**This is your most successful Ideas project so far. What lessons did you take from your previous projects?**

I think that a good project is not enough to get 10,000 votes. First, the main picture needs to be perfect – the graphic style is very important to attract people to your project. After you post your project on LEGO Ideas, you have to share it with everybody, especially on social media. I sent many messages everywhere: Disney fan blogs, LEGO community groups... there are no secrets, you need to work hard so that your project works, especially if you come from a small country like me. Another thing is that a project based on an intellectual property gets more support, because there are a lot of non-LEGO fans who want to add this product to their collection. It was the same for many LEGO Ideas products, like Doctor Who, The Beatles, Ghostbusters, and so on.

**What do you think sets this project apart from your others? What's making it so successful?**

The strength of this project is that it conjures memories for people who saw this movie. In addition, Mary Poppins is famous around the world, and even young people know Mary Poppins because this character exists through generations. That's why this project works.

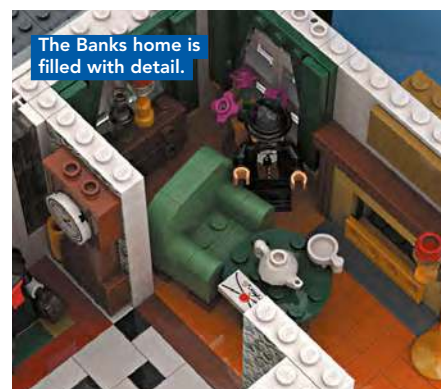
**If the project is approved, are there any compromises or changes you think the LEGO designers might have to make?**

The actual project is not perfect and needs, in my mind, some modifications. Due to the size, the set is hard to move, so I think that we would have to reinforce the basement, or we can also split it into two or three parts,

like 71043 Hogwarts Castle. The design of the minifigures will also be different. I worked on studio software to create this project, so the choice of minifigure parts was limited. The back of the set is not very aesthetic, and two of the buildings are empty, so we could add different things like studio materials (a camera, a chair, costumes). So there are many improvements to do before this project could be an official LEGO product. Nevertheless, if this idea is accepted by the LEGO Group, I want to keep this idea of a curved road.

**What channels have you used to promote your project so far? Which of these do you think has been most successful?**

To promote this project I have used every channel as much as I could, including social media, and the community of Disney and LEGO fans around the world. It's like a spider web, because a page shares your project, and then several people share your project, and then other people share. A publication on a famous page or website can have a huge impact on the number of supporters. So far, two pages have had a big impact (that is, more than 200 supporters in one day). The first one is the LEGO Ideas website the staff pick, so my project was promoted on their site. The second one was Beyond the Brick with the same effect, and I hope that your article will have an impact! ■



## ELSEWHERE ON LEGO IDEAS

There are dozens of projects on LEGO Ideas – here are just a couple worth checking out



**Ideas ID:**  
Il Buono  
**Project:**  
<https://tinyurl.com/udjbe9m>

■ **Sheriff's Safe with Combination Lock**

We've seen safes on LEGO Ideas before, but none are packed with as much character as Il Buono's. That's a strange sentiment for a safe, sure, but its western theme is the perfect window dressing for an elegant combination lock mechanism, which has been achieved entirely using regular LEGO elements.



**Ideas ID:**  
GabKremo  
**Project:**  
<https://tinyurl.com/qw3qsob>

■ **The Dock**

The Ideas theme tends to stick to unique releases, which should automatically rule out this project – after all, its creator openly admits they were inspired by an existing Ideas set, 21310 Old Fishing Store. But we've had multiple space-inspired sets, and this is as charming a build as you'll ever see. We'd definitely snap it up given the chance.

**Fancy getting your LEGO Ideas project featured in Blocks? Send it to [editor@blocksmag.com](mailto:editor@blocksmag.com) with the subject title 'Blocks Ideas [your project name]'.**

# BLOCKS MOCS /

The latest selection of MOCs that have caught the attention of the Blocks team

## SINTERKLAAS

**Builder:**

Aukbricks

**Flickr ID:**

aukbricks



## KENWORTH

**K200**

**Builder:**

Nikolay Sutulin

**Flickr ID:**

Paul Smith



## NAL HUTTA

**NEGOTIATIONS**

**Builder:**

Wout Gillis

**Flickr ID:**

WG Productions



## My Lego Totoro

### MY LEGO

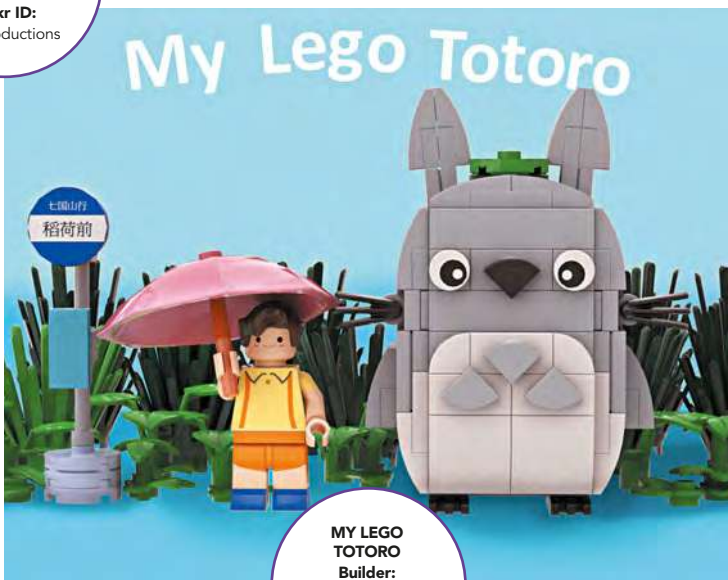
**TOTORO**

**Builder:**

Truman Cheng

**Instagram:**

@legotruman



## VENICE

**(ASSASSIN'S**

**CREED)**

**Builder:**

Jonas Kramm

**Flickr ID:**

Jonas Kramm





# MOC IN PICS / Land Rover Defender

Manuel Nascimento recreates the iconic 4x4 in exacting detail

Words and Pics: Manuel Nascimento

**THE IDEA FOR** building the Land Rover Defender 110 came in 2016 when I was reading a 4x4 magazine. To my surprise it was the end of Defender – a vehicle used in the most diverse terrains, adored by millions of people, including myself. I built the Camel Trophy setting because it was one of the toughest tests of man and machine between 1980 and 2000.



This layout was created for the Fan Weekend 2017 event in Paredes de Coura, Portugal.

The challenge of this construction was to recreate the vehicle with all the functional elements, without spoiling the aesthetics.

One of my favourite parts is the hood shovel (it uses DUPLO) and the tent, which was built by my 70-year-old mother, who is also a LEGO fan.

All electrical elements are controlled by one SBrick and two Power Functions remote controls on the roof. I had a lot of problems with mobility and I advise readers not to put gearboxes in very heavy cars like this one (it weighs 6.5kg), as there will be problems during construction.



LEGO Power Functions lights all work separately – left/right, stop and the headlights.

The suspension consists of eight hard shock absorbers and brakes.

In addition to the four-speed manual gearbox and controlled steering, all five doors open and the winch is electric.

# MOC&A / STORMHOLME CASTLE

**Builder:**  
Patrick Massey  
**Flickr ID:**  
Patrick Massey

Patrick's traditional castle is in contrast with its colourful setting

**Words:** Graham Hancock **Pics:** Patrick Massey

**A**FTER BUILDING ALL manner of castle-related models, Patrick Massey finally took the plunge and built an actual castle. Going beyond the walls, he created a natural environment for the stonework structure to sit within. Blending a carefully crafted castle with a natural environment, he gives the fortification a real sense of place and time.

**Blocks:** How did you decide to build Stormholme Castle? Did you plan for it to be this large?

**Patrick:** Stormholme Castle is the realisation of a dream I had when I first exited my dark ages as an adult. I have been building in the castle genre for years – I've built plenty of villages, towers, forts and other medieval miscellanea, but never an actual castle. Stormholme Castle was my effort to close this gap. I started with a very rough sketch of the castle's layout. I wanted to use the round tower technique I had tried previously, but this time on a much larger scale.

**What was your process for designing and creating the build?**

After sketching out the design, I started

building the castle walls first. This was a deceptively quick process, taking less than a week to build the four towers, connecting walls and gatehouse. Things became a lot more challenging once I started to build the surrounding terrain. I really wanted the castle to sit dominantly above the scene. This meant building at least 10 bricks above the baseplate.

To make this creation more manageable I decided to split it into four sections, each one consisting of six 32x32 baseplates. The rise was created by using 'filler' bricks – the discoloured and otherwise unused bricks in my collection, many of which I have had since I was a child. I relate the process of terrain building to anatomy – the interior 'skeleton' supports the scene and the thin layer of 'skin' on top, which gives the scene its look.

Once the skeleton was complete, the real fun of building the terrain began. Considering the size I had planned for this creation, I knew it would be necessary to include as much variety in the landscaping as I could. One

of the main features I focused on was the river, with its sizeable elevation changes and numerous rapids. The cascading river quickly became one of my favourite parts of this scene. Some of the angles look gorgeous, especially where the river exits the castle wall and flows precipitously downstream. It's hard to see if you aren't looking for it, but the river actually begins with a tall waterfall built into the mountain, which also forms the MOC's background. I thought this was a nice feature for a castle to have, as during a siege its defenders could rely on a fresh water source.

The two rear sections were the first to be completed. The real challenge here was fitting in the castle walls, especially the two diagonal sections. I placed them by laying tiles, installing the walls on top and then building up the landscape to hide any exposed tiles. The two rear sections attach to one another in just several places – the gatehouse and a few plates that connect both sections, but can also be easily removed.







There are constant shifts in the terrain.



Orange and red leaves adorn the model.

One unforeseen challenge was the inadequate table space I possessed. My main building table could barely hold one section. That meant moving the project to the dinner table – there was plenty of room, but it was a very tough sell for my wife. It was not too bad at first, but it became a bit of a sore subject as the months passed by. For a solid six months we were unable to eat at our dinner table. Now I am forbidden from using that table again – a small price to pay to keep our marriage intact.

From there I began the two front sections,

which eventually included the small village and swamp. The swamp itself was not planned, but was an improvisation to compensate for the parts I lacked to complete the terrain (I had already blown my budget on 1x2 dark grey tiles). As I laid out the swamp, I quickly realised it was going to be a huge focal point. The swamp is dark green bricks laid on the side; a simple technique, but very effective. I then constructed the two houses and – perhaps my favourite part of the entire scene – the wooden watchtower. Like the castle walls, the larger hut and watchtower

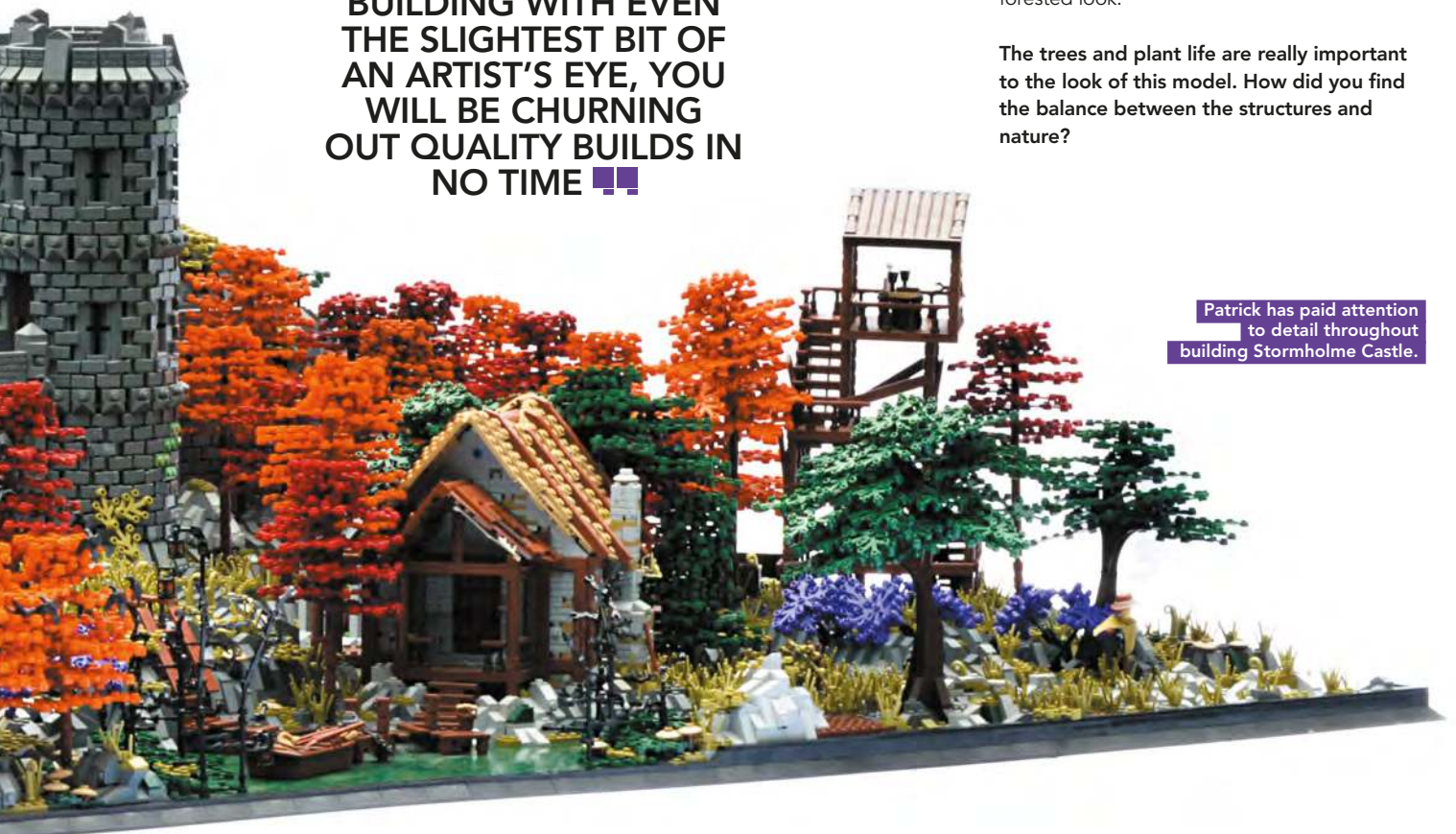
were placed off-angle to add some dimension and variety to the layout.

At this point, almost a year from the project's start date, the real fun began – adding all of the final touches and little details that help bring Stormholme Castle to life. One of the big tasks here was creating all of the foliage. Altogether the scene includes around 50 trees and approximately 700 each of the dark red and dark orange leaves. The fall colours work perfectly with the rest of the subdued colour palette. Members of my local group, ArkLUG, joke that I'm averse to using any colour without a 'dark' prefix. The trees are interwoven with one another, especially on the left side of the build, to give a genuinely forested look.

The trees and plant life are really important to the look of this model. How did you find the balance between the structures and nature?

■ ■ IF YOU APPROACH BUILDING WITH EVEN THE SLIGHTEST BIT OF AN ARTIST'S EYE, YOU WILL BE CHURNING OUT QUALITY BUILDS IN NO TIME ■ ■

Patrick has paid attention to detail throughout building Stormholme Castle.







The castle entrance.



The weeping willow hangs over the swamp.

There is a certain planned balance to the mix of natural and manmade elements. For instance, I wanted to depict the castle as an old structure, and perhaps not as important as it once was – thus the tall trees that surround it (any trees around the castle would have been felled during its construction, and the foliage kept low to reduce obstructions in defensive situations). There is also some thought to the idea that no matter how substantial man's architectural achievements are, it is nature that always holds the greatest beauty and strength.

Since I planned to carry this creation to events, I tried a new method to make the trees stronger and more stable for transporting – using brown Technic elements for the trunks and connecting them and the leafy tops with 4mm bars. The trees look great and hold together quite well, too. I wasn't sure about the small dark purple trees at first, but I think they turned out well, giving just the right splash of colour in an otherwise drab scene.

My favourite trees were the dead ones I added to the foremost swamp. They are so creepy and add so much to the swampy atmosphere.

The best compliment I have received from people who have viewed this build is how realistic it looks. From a distance, it is hard to tell this is even LEGO. I think that was achieved because I live in a very beautiful and mountainous area, and I spend a lot of time outside. Building realistic landscapes has always come naturally to me – I simply have to look out of my window for inspiration. I also strove to ensure that no four-stud-by-four-stud section was like any other. Every section the eye rests on is completely different from the next.

#### How pleased are you with the finished build?

As much as I enjoy how the castle turned out, it's the landscaping and foliage that really catch my eye. I think it is this element of

Stormholme Castle that brings the whole thing to life. For the most part, the build doesn't contain any crazy techniques or new part uses to write home about. In fact, when it comes to how I build, I consider my style rather basic. Stormholme is no different, though its scale somewhat hides this fact.

There seems to be an arms race among castle builders to try ever crazier and advanced techniques. Personally, I'm just not that smart. But that shouldn't keep anyone from being a good builder. Stormholme Castle, like many of my other creations, is a good example of how focusing on the right colours, adding dimension and understanding the basics of composition can make a build stand out. You do not have to invent some new and crazy technique to make a first-class MOC. If you approach building with even the slightest bit of an artist's eye, you will be churning out quality builds in no time. ■

Stormholme Castle sits across 24 baseplates.





# MOC IN PICS / Dragonglass Tower

This dark tower gives off a villainous vibe

Words: Graham Hancock Pics: Elvin

**ELVIN'S IMPOSING TOWER** is a dramatic black structure that contrasts nicely with the striking red dragon that's guarding it. A mixture of bricks and build techniques give the walls an authentic stonework look, and detailing around the windows adds an ornate feel to it. There's certainly a sense that the minifigures dotted around the model are the bad guys...

I utilised Larry Lars' window technique, so all of the credit for that goes to him.

The purpose of this build was to give my minifigures a real home instead of a storage box. I altered some of the minifigures to give them different personalities – the woman with an axe is my favourite.

My favourite part of the build is the mini dragon statues. The only drawback is that the LEGO Group has not produced all of the parts used in dark stone grey yet.

Builder:  
Elvin  
Flickr ID:  
Elvin

This is my first large build in black. To avoid the reflection of light when taking photos, I created some textures that give some variety and make the whole build more realistic.

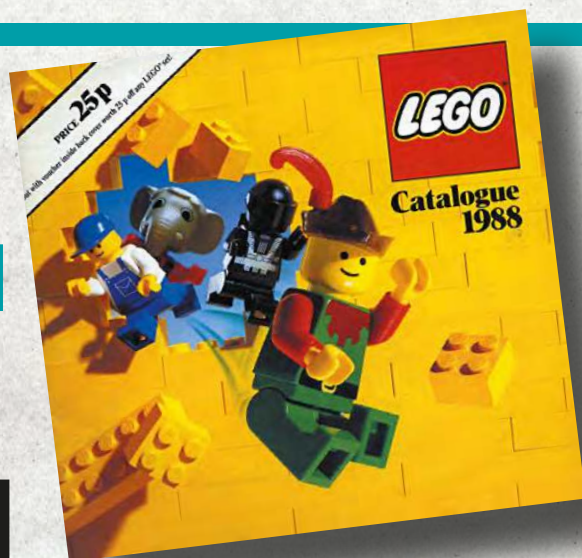
I actually built this with a modular design in mind. All four levels can be easily detached from each other, just like the official modular building series.





# REWIND

LEGO Robin Hood dominated this cover.



## FORESTMEN

Expanding the world of shields and swords, the Forestmen brought their Robin Hood-style treehouse living to the Castle theme

Words: Graham Hancock Pics: Daniel Konstanski, The LEGO Group, Brickset

**THE CASTLE THEME** conjures up certain images: knights, shields, swords, and the titular castles. But over the decades, it has encompassed a much broader range of subject matter than the name suggests. Before the theme touched on dragons and magic, it turned to the stuff of legend for inspiration.

Story has it that Robin Hood and his merry men lived in Sherwood Forest, outside Nottingham. Adapted in films dozens of times over the years – going all the way back to 1908 – something about the outlaw, who robbed from the rich to give to the poor, has endured. It makes perfect sense that this would serve as inspiration for LEGO sets, and the Castle theme was the perfect home for them.

First introduced in 1987, 6066 Camouflaged Outpost marked the

inaugural appearance of these smiling minifigures. Unlike the typical turrets and towers of Castle sets, the Forestmen models tended to be based around trees that had been turned into bases by the smiling green-clad archers. Most of the minifigures had a quiver on their back and a bow in hand – a further nod to the archery prowess that Robin Hood was famous for.

In the UK, certain sets were specifically named for Robin Hood, but elsewhere they were given the more generic Forestmen name. The latter fits in better with the various factions that expanded the Castle world over the years, as it became a sprawling LEGO theme with sub-themes like the Forestmen taking it in new directions.





'AS MUCH AS I LOVED BUILDING THE SETS, I WAS ITCHING TO START PLAYING OUT STORIES WITH THE MINIFIGURES'



**BY THE NUMBERS**  
Years active:

**1987-1990**

'THE FORESTMEN STUCK IN MY MIND FOR A LONG TIME'



■ Year of release: 1988 Aftermarket price: £40 used, £165 new / Minifigures: 2 / Pieces: 201

## 6054 FORESTMEN'S HIDEOUT



**THERE'S NOTHING LIKE** the joy of unfolding a hinged LEGO Castle set from the 1980s. At the time, it was common for sets to use hinge pieces so that the structures would look fully enclosed, but could also be opened up for play. It was a far cry from today's method of simply having open-backed buildings.

The colour choice for the trees in these sets was odd, with the LEGO Group opting for black rather than brown, but given the many leaf elements that were added to them it was very clear what they were intended to be.

A tree-mendous hideout.

This little set does a great job of giving the impression that the Forestmen have taken an existing tree and made some small modifications to provide themselves with a hideout. Once opened up, there are a few rooms for the minifigures to inhabit, including one that peeks out from underneath the sloped roof.

Given the fairly traditional Castle sets that had gone before, this set – and the rest of the subtheme – really provided a breath of fresh air, offering something quite unique and the opportunity for some fun minifigure conflict. Tree-based sets had certainly not been the norm before.

■ Year of release: 1988 Aftermarket price: £104 used, £1,200 new / Minifigures: 5 / Pieces: 203

## 6071 FORESTMEN'S CROSSING

**THE FIRST THING** that jumps out about this delightful set is the baseplate. Those excellent printed baseplates that came with sets of the era were almost always a treat, and a nice flowing river was the perfect starting point for some building.

What made these early years of Castle so special wasn't sophisticated building techniques or mind-blowing ways of constructing the models, but the sense of fun and adventure. In the case of this set, what could be more exciting to a young child than a rope bridge above a river?

By building the tree on one side and the stone structure on the other, the bridge could be elevated to the highest point possible, allowing for plenty of drama in minifigure duels. In addition to the rope bridge, the model features multiple levels and makes use of the hinge joints for a hidden door, behind which the Forestmen can store their treasure.

While the male characters all had the same smiling face that was common to all



minifigures, this set was released in 1990, after Pirates had introduced the female minifigure face. 6071 borrows that head, and follows a similar torso print for a character that seems sure to have been inspired by Maid Marian.



■ **Year of release:** 1987 **Aftermarket price:** £75 used, £379 new / **Minifigures:** 2 / **Pieces:** 236

# 6066 CAMOUFLAGED OUTPOST

**REFERRED TO IN** the UK as 6066 Robin Hood's Secret Cave, this set offers a nice, sizable hideout for the Forestmen. A tree sits above a rocky cave, which is a perfect spot for hiding out, storing treasure and apparently enjoying a glass of mead.

A black rocky section at the side can be turned, as if the minifigures are moving a boulder to access the interior. For better play

access, hinges mean that the entire top of the rocky section can be lifted up, with space to place characters within. The sloped part serves a dual purpose – as well as allowing for access, it makes the shape look fairly natural, which was a tall order in this era of LEGO sets. Leaf elements give the impression that it is overgrown.

As with so many of these sets, hinges

meant that the model could also be opened up sideways. A look-out spot within the tree has space for a couple of Forestmen to stand guard. Alongside other sets in the theme, horses were common, with every good outlaw archer also needing to be able to ride a steed. The horse had only been introduced a year earlier, in 1986, so was still a novelty.





■ Year of release: 1989 Aftermarket price: £75 used, £379 new / Minifigures: 6 / Pieces: 236

# 6077 FORESTMEN'S RIVER FORTRESS

**BY FAR THE** largest of the sets in the subtheme, the River Fortress was known as Robin's Lake Stronghold in some regions. This ambitious set combines the tree structures that are common within this subtheme with a more traditional castle building, for a very imposing and significant location.

The use of a blue baseplate firmly sets the fortress in water, an appropriately natural setting for the Forestmen to be defending their treasure. A drawbridge connects the structure to a 2x8 section of land, with the LEGO Group clearly only aiming to hint at

the shore. Further conveying the remote water-based nature of the base is the small raft, with a lone outlaw having used barrels to construct a platform that can get the loot to his fellow merry men.

What works so well with this set is the shaping, with the tree branches jutting out and featuring large leaf elements, clearly defining the model as a tree, but with the stone structure looking plausibly built into the natural environment. The back of the building looks a little flat, but it does allow for easy opening and access to the inside.

The interior is a little limited, with only one floor – aside from the watery prison that the included knight can be held in. The top floor is better, with the obligatory late 1980s LEGO winch for the Forestmen to use to bring their treasure up and down.

While this is arguably the best set of the subtheme, they are all well balanced and offer a nice little collection. None of them quite live up to the sizable castles that are found elsewhere in the theme, but they do offer an interesting off-shoot focused on a unique faction.

They definitely all look merry.





# FROM FORESTMEN TO EWOKS



**WHEN ROBIN HOOD:** Prince of Thieves was released in 1991, toy manufacturer Kenner released a line of products based on the Kevin Costner movie. Sherwood Forest Playset re-used the Ewok Village playset from the 1983 Star Wars: Return of the Jedi action figure

range, but without the teddy bear-related accessories.

Those looking for a modern way to build a Forestmen display could do much worse than reversing this idea and adapting 2013's 10236 Ewok Village for the classic minifigures. It's a

nice playset, with rope bridges and platforms set within the trees – and it wouldn't take much work for the Robin Hood-inspired crew to feel at home in it.

## RE-APPEARANCES

- In 1996, the Dark Forest subtheme offered a twist on the classic Forestmen, with sets clearly influenced by the earlier releases. The men do not seem quite as merry in these sets.
- 8683 Collectible Minifigures Series 1 introduced a modern Forestman, using up-to-date printing techniques and detailing to demonstrate what the classic archers would look like today
- Those who prefer the original were not short-changed, though, as a replica Forestman was released in the 2011 Bricktober collection of minifigure magnets.





# Welcome to the LEGO Gallery

The Wooden Minifigure gets the launch it deserves, as the LEGO Originals Pop-up Gallery provides Londoners with a new artistic showcase

Words and Pics: Graham Hancock

**EXPOSED BRICKWORK AND** plinths displaying customised items. A central London location. Aside from the breakfast launch rather than an evening one, this is just like any other art gallery. What distinguishes it, though, is that the items on display are copies of the new LEGO Originals Wooden Minifigure, each one customised by a different individual – or in one case, a duo.

However, it's only temporary. This LEGO Originals Pop-up Gallery has opened its doors in the Seven Dials district for two days at the

**THE MINIFIGURE WAS CHOSEN TO BE THE FIRST ICON OF CREATIVITY WE CELEBRATE BECAUSE IT HAS IMPACTED SO MANY MILLIONS OF CHILDREN ACROSS THE WORLD**

beginning of November, inviting LEGO VIPs to buy the new Wooden Minifigure ahead of its global launch. First, a presentation is taking place to give a sense of what this new product is, and why it is being released now.

'With this new LEGO Originals product we are aiming to celebrate creativity,' says LEGO Creative Design Director Sine Møller. 'The minifigure was chosen to be the first icon of creativity we're celebrating in a scaled-up material – this being wood – because it has impacted so many millions of children across





Sine Møller introduces the gallery.



Nadine Lee reveals her printed minifigure.



the world. It has definitely earned its moment of pride.'

The choice of wood as a material is also relevant to the LEGO Group's heritage, as Sine notes: 'Ole Kirk Kristiansen created some of the first hand-crafted wooden toys in 1932.' While the wooden duck is the most well-known, a variety of different wooden toys launched before the company became synonymous with interlocking bricks.

While the minifigure has been upscaled in a few different ways over the years, it has never looked quite as elegant as this 5:1 scale wooden edition. The word 'LEGO' is etched on to the oversized stud as it is on a regular minifigure, but otherwise it is completely blank. And this is where the LEGO Group's ethos of creativity comes in.

Sine and her team are hoping that people who buy the product will make it their own, customising it in whatever fashion they see fit – hence this pop-up; it's an opportunity to show people first-hand what can be done with the minifigure. No two are the same.

'We have invited some of our LEGO designers to see what they would make of it if given a blank canvas,' says Sine, gesturing

## ■ ■ THE MINIFIGURE IS PERSONAL TO A LOT OF PEOPLE. I'M CURIOUS TO SEE PEOPLE'S STORIES COME THROUGH ■ ■

towards the pieces that have been created by the talented people working at the LEGO Group.

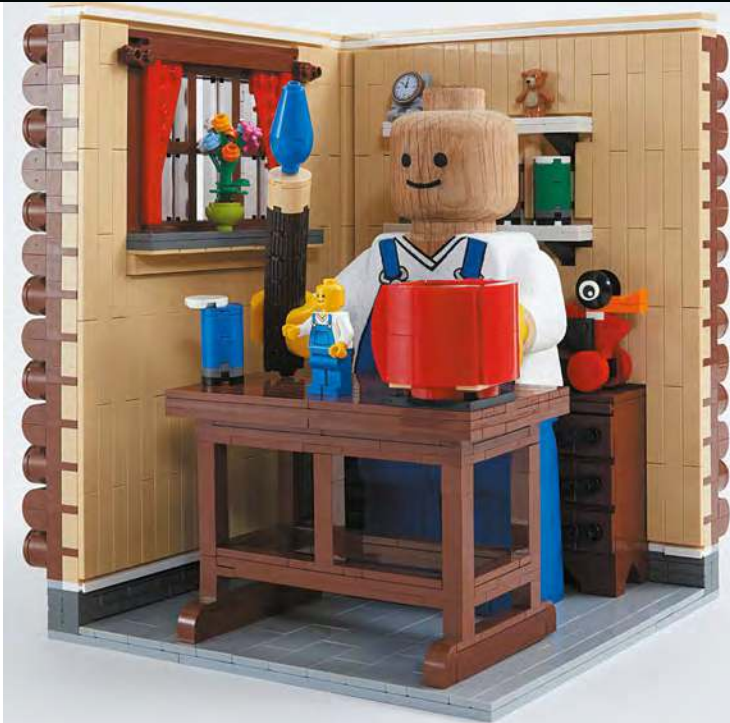
LEGO Designer Laura Perron is one of those brick artists attending the launch, where her work is on display for the first time. 'When I think of the minifigure it is very cheerful, and it brings me a lot of joy. They are just so cute and adorable,' she explains. 'So I thought, 'Okay, how can I translate that into this 3D





### MEL CADDICK

The LEGO designer painted the wooden minifigure to match an actual minifigure, then built a workshop around him using bricks. In the finished scene, the upscaled minifigure is painting a mini version of themselves for a very meta model.



### LORRAINE FAURE AND MAX VALEMOIS

Two LEGO design experts teamed up for this homage to LEGO Pirates, which saw them whittle one leg down to a peg-leg, and use pyrography and sewing to complete the look of the minifigure.



### JAKE BLAIS

LEGO content expert Jake Blais was inspired by the town he grew up in as a child, which had a strong whaling tradition, and the stories he was reading, such as Jules Verne. Often using the minifigure in his paintings, the 3D canvas allowed Jake to have the minifigure become part of the story.



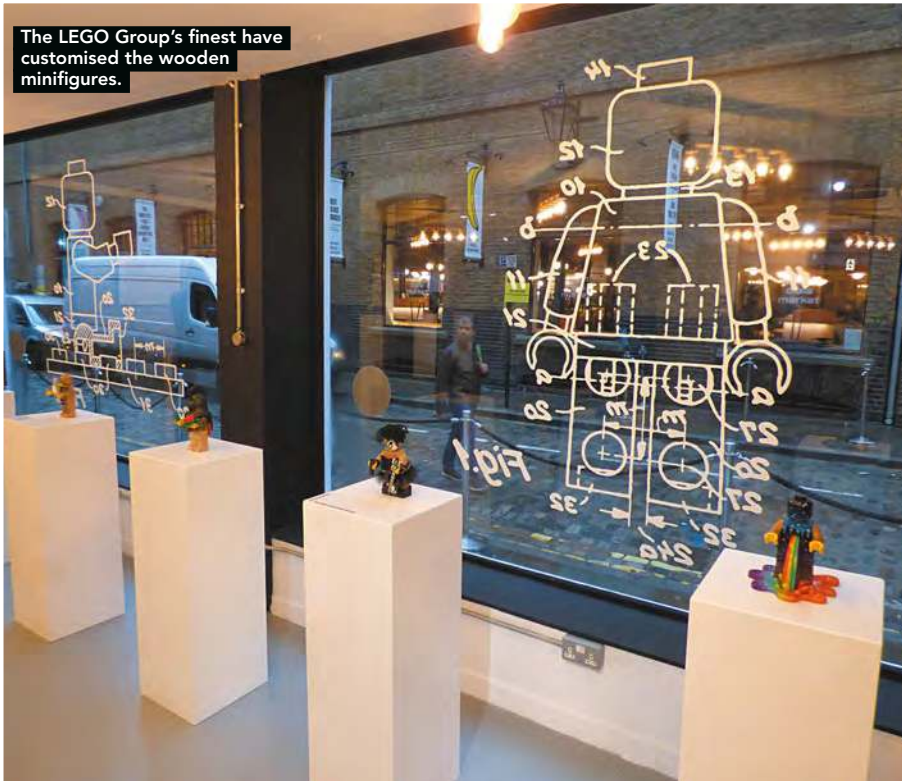
### TOM HARRISON

The London-based artist was inspired by street art, and sought to incorporate bold colours and sharp lines into the finished piece. Black and white were both used for a strong contrast.





The LEGO Group's finest have customised the wooden minifigures.



wooden canvas?'

'There's a drawer in the building area where we work filled with small LEGO elements, and they're sorted in rainbow order. It's beautiful, and just so lovely to work with. I love working with the LEGO colour palette, so I just wanted to fuse that into the model, and I love working with cardstock paper, so I used those inspirations to create this, which is hopefully that feeling of joy and happiness and bright colourful explosions, to celebrate rainbow colours.'

The resulting minifigure, covered in hole-punched dots, certainly packs in the colour. Laura's colleague Nadine Lee, also a designer, has taken a completely different approach and

## ■ ■ WE ALL KNOW WE HAVE TO GROW OLDER – IT DOESN'T MEAN WE HAVE TO GROW UP ■ ■

printed a photograph on to the minifigure.

'I thought it was time to give a celebration of the LEGO family and the founders of the brand, so in my mind was this photograph of the founders,' she explains. 'You can see the first founder of LEGO who made these beautiful wooden toys, Ole, you see Godtfred and you see Kjeld.' While there may not have been room for fourth-generation owner Thomas, Nadine has included a nod to the company's future with a brick-built plant for the minifigure's hand.

Each minifigure comes with a small selection of bricks, along with a booklet containing some inspiration, including pictures of the pieces on display in the gallery. 'I think the minifigure is personal to a lot of people, so I'm really curious to see people's personal stories come through, and I hope people have fun experimenting and visualising that on a minifigure canvas,' Laura enthuses.

Those who purchase the exclusive item from the pop-up during its two days of operation also receive a free print, which is from the same series as those that are available from the online VIP Rewards Centre. That's in addition to the free inspiration that is provided by a dozen or so LEGO minifigures, decorated by some of the world's most creative individuals.

To wrap up the launch event, Sine quotes the third-generation owner of the LEGO Group, Kjeld Kirk Kristiansen: 'We all know we have to grow older – it doesn't mean we have to grow up.' Anyone buying a 5:1 scale wooden minifigure is certainly living by that mantra. ■



Laura Perron went wild with a hole punch.



Laura's minifigure was inspired by colourful LEGO elements.



Classic LEGO concept art adorns the walls.





# LEGO EVENTS

Do you run an event that should be listed here? Get in touch with us via [graham@blocksmag.com](mailto:graham@blocksmag.com) and we'll add it to the list

## JANUARY 2020

### Bricks LA (USA)

**When:** January 10 – 13

**Where:** Pasadena Convention Center, 300 E Green Street, Pasadena, California, 91101

**What's on:** Hundreds of fan-created models will be on display, shopping opportunities featuring LEGO sets, minifigures, jewellery, gifts, and unique brick accessories. Panels and discussions will cover the brick community and building techniques.

**Visit:** [bricksla.com](http://bricksla.com)

### Brick Fair Alabama (USA)

**When:** January 18 – 19

**Where:** The BJCC, 2100 Richard Arrington Jr Blvd N, Birmingham, Alabama 35203

**What's on:** The family-friendly and fun event will feature amazing custom creations made from millions of LEGO bricks, hands-on games and activities, as well as vendors selling all sorts of unique LEGO-related items.

**Visit:** [www.brickfair.com](http://www.brickfair.com)

### Calder Valley Brick Show (UK)

**When:** January 26

**Where:** Mytholmroyd Community & Leisure Centre, Mytholmroyd, HX7 5AF

**What's on:** Displays of professional built models, hands-on activities and competitions.

**Visit:** [www.facebook.com/bricktopiaevents](https://www.facebook.com/bricktopiaevents)

## FEBRUARY 2020

### Chico Brick Builders Show (USA)

**When:** February 8 – 9

**Where:** 1184 East Ave, Chico, California, 95926

**What's on:** Great displays, lots of activities and LEGO bricks for everyone to play with.

### Thirsk Brick Show (UK)

**When:** February 15

**Where:** Thirsk Town Hall, Westgate, Thirsk, YO7 1QR

**What's on:** The show features exhibits, traders and activities for LEGO fans of all ages.

**Visit:** [www.brickalley.co.uk/thirsk](http://www.brickalley.co.uk/thirsk)

### Ely Brick Show (UK)

**When:** February 29

**Where:** The Countess Free Church, 10 Chapel Street, Ely, Cambridgeshire, CB6 1AD

**What's on:** The event will showcase LEGO models from around the UK, including a mind-boggling great ball contraption. There will also be a LEGO play area, activities, retailers and refreshments.

**Visit:** [brickish.org/event/ely-brick-show-2020](http://brickish.org/event/ely-brick-show-2020)

## MARCH 2020

### BrickCascade (USA)

**When:** February 27 – March 1

**Where:** Oregon Convention Center, 777 NE Martin Luther King Jr Blvd, Portland, OR 97232

**What's on:** LEGO builds will be on display and a DUPLO build area will allow young guests to play. Shopping opportunities including LEGO sets, books, t-shirts, and jewellery stalls will be available.

**Visit:** [www.brickcascade.com](http://www.brickcascade.com)

### National Space Centre Brickish Weekend

**When:** March 14 – 15

**What's on:** It's the 40th anniversary of Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back, so expect some fan models to celebrate the iconic movie. There will be lots of other space and non-space LEGO exhibits, a huge mosaic and plenty of inspiration for budding LEGO fans. There will also be the Fairy Bricks tombola, play areas and vendors.

**Visit:** [brickish.org/event/nsc-brickish-weekend-2020](http://brickish.org/event/nsc-brickish-weekend-2020)

### Brick Days Omaha (USA)

**When:** March 27 – 29

**Where:** Mid-America Center, Council Bluffs, IA 51501

**What's on:** A family friendly event with 15,000 square feet of LEGO builds – including all-new creations – as well as games, activities and vendors selling the latest swag.

**Visit:** [brickdays.com/brick-days-Omaha-2020/](http://brickdays.com/brick-days-Omaha-2020/)

## APRIL 2020

### The Brighton Bricks Show (UK)

**When:** April 11

**Where:** Brighton Unitarian Church, New Road, Brighton, BN1 1UF

**What's on:** There will be displays and traders at this show full of LEGO fun.

**Visit:** [brightonbricks.com/brighton-bricks-events](http://brightonbricks.com/brighton-bricks-events)

### St Philip's Brick Show (UK)

**When:** April 25

**Where:** St. Philip's Church, Cosham, Portsmouth, PO6 2TL

**What's on:** LEGO displays and family-friendly activities.

### BrickFest Live

**When:** April 25 – 26

**Where:** The Greater Philadelphia Expo Center, Oaks, PA 19456

**What's on:** Activities include a speedway, gaming area, mosaic building, mini golf and plenty of building opportunities. There will also be photo ops and model displays.

**Visit:** [www.brickfestlive.com](http://www.brickfestlive.com)

## MAY 2020

### Discovery Brick Show (UK)

**When:** May 2 – 3

**Where:** Discovery Museum, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 4JA

**What's on:** Held by the Brick Alley LEGO User Group, the event takes place at the Discovery Museum. It offers displays of LEGO models, sellers and activities as well as the opportunity to enjoy the museum.

**Visit:** [www.brickalley.co.uk/discovery](http://www.brickalley.co.uk/discovery)

## OCTOBER 2020

### Great Western Brick Show (UK)

**When:** October 3 – 4

**Where:** STEAM, The Museum of GWR, Swindon, SN2 2TA

**What's on:** At the Brickish Association's long-running show, the LUG presents one of the largest displays of LEGO models in the UK. As well as admire the builds, guests can help create an all-new giant LEGO mosaic, visit the LEGO Shop and other independent traders as well as get building in the brick pits.

**Visit:** [www.greatwesternbrickshow.com](http://www.greatwesternbrickshow.com)



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# Blocks

# BRICKIONARY

The language of LEGO has a wide, varied and ever-growing vocabulary.  
Blocks magazine helps you decode it

## A

**ABS:** Acrylonitrile butadiene styrene. The plastic most LEGO parts are made from.

**AFOL:** Adult Fan of LEGO.

## B

**Billund:** Town in Denmark where the headquarters and primary design centre of the LEGO Group is situated.

**Bley:** Bluish grey. Refers to the current LEGO grey, compared to the old version (known as... old grey).

**BOLOCS:** Build containing many different colours, often uncoordinated.

**Brick-built:** A build composed of basic LEGO elements rather than specialised elements, i.e. brick-built figures.

**Brickset:** An online database of LEGO sets.

**BURP:** Big Ugly Rock Piece. Moulded piece five bricks high with jagged edges.

## C

**CC:** Classic Castle, a LEGO castle fan site.

**Cheese Slope:** A sloping LEGO part, named after the fact yellow pieces look like a wedge of cheese.

**Clone Brands:** Construction toys similar and often compatible with LEGO, but cheaper and lower quality. Usually despised by LEGO fans.

**Custom:** A LEGO creation or individual element that uses non-LEGO parts, modified parts or accessories from third party vendors like BrickArms or BrickForge.

**Customiser:** A LEGO fan who's not afraid to modify LEGO parts. Customising may include painting, cutting, drilling, melting or adding non-LEGO parts to a creation. Considered heresy to the purist LEGO fan.

## D

**D2C:** Direct to Consumer sets.

Generally exclusive to LEGO stores, with high piece counts.

**Dark Ages:** The period in a LEGO fan's

life when they set aside LEGO in favour of other, non-LEGO pursuits.

**Diorama:** Usually a large build/scene with a base.

**Draft:** An activity common at LEGO club meetings in which fans each bring a LEGO set, sort out all the elements and then take turns in picking out the type of part they want. An easy way to obtain parts in large quantities without buying multiple parts of the set yourself.

## E

**Erling:** A 1x1 brick with one stud on its recessed side, named after its designer.

## G

**Greeble:** Pseudo-technical detail added to a LEGO creation to enhance its appearance, often seen in LEGO Space and Mecha creations.

**GWP:** Gift with purchase. A promotional item or set obtained by spending a minimum amount at LEGO Stores or LEGO.com.

## H

**Half-Stud Offset:** A building technique that allows building without regards to standard alignment of studs on a plate, usually achieved with a jumper plate.

## I

**Illegal:** LEGO building techniques that break the 'rules' for connections between LEGO elements used by official LEGO set designers, particularly connections that stress the LEGO elements.

**Inventory:** The list of LEGO elements included in an official LEGO set. Several LEGO fan sites host set inventories including Peeron, Brickset and BrickLink.

## J

**Jumper Plate:** A 1x2 or 2x2 LEGO plate with only one stud in the centre. Useful for half-stud offset building.

## K

**KFOL:** Kid Fan of LEGO. The LEGO Group's primary target demographic of between 5-12 years.

## L

**LDD:** LEGO Digital Designer. Free software for PC and Mac that lets you build LEGO models virtually.

**Legal:** LEGO building techniques that follow guidelines for official LEGO set designers.

**LEGOS:** Incorrect plural of LEGO.

**LUG:** LEGO User Group. Local or regional LEGO clubs that meet and interact primarily in an offline 'real-world' context. This is changing as the number of online LUGs grows.

## M

**MF:** Minifigure.

**Microfig:** Small figures, like those in the LEGO Games series.

**Midi Scale:** Refers to sets that are between miniature and minifigure scale. They do not include minifigures but are more detailed than mini sets. So far only Star Wars sets have midi versions.

**Minifigure Scale:** A LEGO creation built for the scale of standard LEGO minifigures.

**MOC:** My Own Creation. A model designed and built by a LEGO fan without instructions. Often used as a verb, 'MOCing'.

**Mod:** A modification of an official LEGO set, usually changing part colours or adding to original designs.

## P

**PAB:** Pick-A-Brick. Buying individual bricks in the quantities needed from the LEGO Group's online or physical stores.

**PAB Wall:** The Pick-A-Brick wall found at official LEGO stores.

**POOP:** Parts Out Of Other Parts. Huge, ugly pieces that could (and should) have been made from existing smaller





parts rather than moulded in one massive lump of plastic.

**Purist:** A LEGO fan who only uses official LEGO elements. Can be applied to LEGO creations that only contain official LEGO elements with no modifications or custom parts.

## S

**S@H or SAH:** The LEGO Group's online store, [shop.LEGO.com](http://shop.LEGO.com). Used to be called Shop At Home.

**SHIP:** Seriously Heavy Investment in Parts. A MOC, usually a spaceship, over 100 studs long.

**Sigfig:** The minifigure version of a LEGO fan that is used in online communities as an avatar or signature minifigure.

**SNIR:** Studs Not In a Row. A building technique using bricks positioned diagonally.

**SNOT:** Studs Not On Top. A building technique that places elements on their sides or even upside down to achieve a smooth surface.

**SPUA:** Special Part Used Again. A brick produced for a specific theme, but used for another.

**STAMP.** Stickers Across Multiple Pieces.

## T

**TBB:** The Brothers Brick, an online LEGO fan site.

**TFOL:** Teen Fan of LEGO.

**TLG:** The LEGO Group, the privately held parent company for all LEGO-related brands and companies worldwide.

**TRU:** Toys R Us.

## U

**UCS:** Ultimate Collector's Series. A line of large LEGO Star Wars sets designed for older teens and adults.

## V

**Vignette:** A small scene recreated on a square plate, generally 8x8 studs.

## W

**WIP:** Work in progress, usually referring to a MOC.

## BASIC BRICKS

**Baseplates:** The foundation for many projects, be it houses, space bases or castles. They're normally thin plates with no connections underneath so you can only build on top. Some older sets included raised baseplates resembling

rocks, hills and other landscaping.

**Bricks:** At the core of LEGO is the basic brick. They come in a wide range of sizes, usually denoted by their stud pattern – i.e. 2x2, 2x6 – and in a huge colour palette.

**Measurements:** LEGO fans usually refer to parts by the number of studs they have. For example, a brick that has two studs on the short side and four studs on the longer side would be called a 2x4 brick.

**Plates:** Thinner than bricks but not as thin as baseplates. Three plates stacked together equals the height of one standard brick. Can be joined from above or below like standard bricks.

**Printed Parts:** Can be bricks, plates or tiles. They come with printed designs, often referred to as decorated parts.

**Studs:** The fundamental joining method of basic LEGO bricks.

**Tiles:** Thin, like plates but without any studs on top (see SNOT).

■ If you can think of a widely-used LEGO term that's not in the Brictionary, drop us a line at [editor@blocksmag.com](mailto:editor@blocksmag.com) to get it included.





# THE SWEETEST MONEYMAKER

At Christmas time, invest in gingerbread, says the BrickPicker team

Words: Ed Mack, BrickPicker Pics: The LEGO Group

**A** S I WRITE this, it's near the end of October and the holiday shopping season is approaching quickly. From mid-November through the first week of January, some of the best deals of the year can be found on retiring LEGO sets. Retailers are clearing out old inventory and major discounts can be found on most LEGO themes over the next two or three months.

While major retailers in the UK like Smyths, Tesco and Asda, and retailers in the US like Walmart and Target, plus online retailers like Amazon are clearing out old inventory with 30-40% off deals, LEGO.com is a little more conservative with its discounts, usually ranging from 10-20% off. But the LEGO Group does something other retailers do not, or cannot: it produces promotional LEGO sets and polybags that are given away with qualifying purchases.

Back in the 2015 holiday shopping season, the LEGO Group gave away 40139 Gingerbread House as a free promotional item with purchases over £60 in the UK, and \$99 in the US. It's a 277-piece set that comes in a box marked '2015 Limited Edition', and it's one of the best promotional sets that the LEGO Group has ever released, in my opinion.

It's a wonderful replica of the traditional gingerbread house in ABS plastic, and makes an excellent decoration in any LEGO fan's home during the holiday season. What's better yet, the Gingerbread House was free with qualifying purchases, and has exploded in growth over the past four years. Current prices for this 'free' set range anywhere from \$125 to \$150 in the US, which is pretty darn amazing considering this was a set that was of no cost to the buyer.

Fast forward to the 2019 holiday shopping season, and a follow-up set has been released, 40337 Gingerbread House. At the time of writing, no definitive information has been given on the set or the corresponding promotion. Most likely from the pictures I have seen, it will be a similar sort of set and box configuration, with probably a similar qualifying purchase at LEGO.com and in LEGO Stores. The set itself looks like a micro version of this year's Winter Village set, 10267 Gingerbread House. 40337 also has a little plaque referring to the year 2019.

If I know the LEGO Group – and I do – it likes to throw a bone to LEGO collectors every once in a while, and this could be the start of an annual gingerbread house promotional collection. If that is the case, then 40139 and 40337 will become even more valuable. Regardless, if history repeats itself with 40337 Gingerbread House, then a free promotional item becomes a valuable asset, and having at least one is a priority. In order to maximise the deal, I will often buy other discounted LEGO sets during the holidays with double VIP point promotions, and the whole deal gets even sweeter! ■





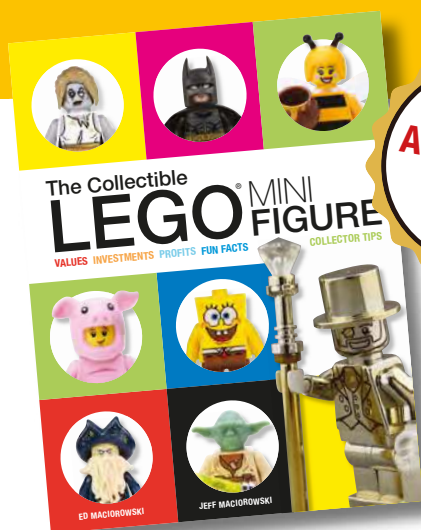


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# THE Blocks REBUILD CHALLENGE

Blocks' least adept builders take on the challenge of rebuilding LEGO sets into something – anything – else, all within 15 minutes



75195 – The original set, which you'll notice is a very different speeder and walker to mine. Very different.

I created these using only half the pieces from the original set, which I'm telling myself is a masterclass in efficiency.

## WHAT IS IT?

On the salt plains of Crait, Resistance Speeder Pilot Nodin Chavri and a First Order Walker Driver go toe-to-toe in this year's Star Wars spin-off, 'Honey, I Shrunk The Last Jedi'. When they inevitably crash into each other, the parts to their ski speeder and AT-M6 walker scatter, leaving the pair to piece together what they can. Nodin gets the good stuff and puts together a mech, while the hapless First Order trooper is only left with enough bricks to build himself the world's worst speeder.

**Builder:** Chris  
**Set:** 75195 Ski Speeder vs. First Order Walker Microfighters  
**Pieces:** 216

## THE BUILDING

**LET ME TELL** you: 15 minutes is not a lot of time. When I started cobbling together the mech suit, though, I had a brief spell of confidence that I might actually not fit the bill for this rebuild challenge. Then I brushed it aside to build the speeder, and remembered why Graham and I are classed as Blocks' least adept builders. That's because I've very imaginatively put together – using the parts from Ski Speeder vs. First Order Walker Microfighters – a... speeder and a walker.

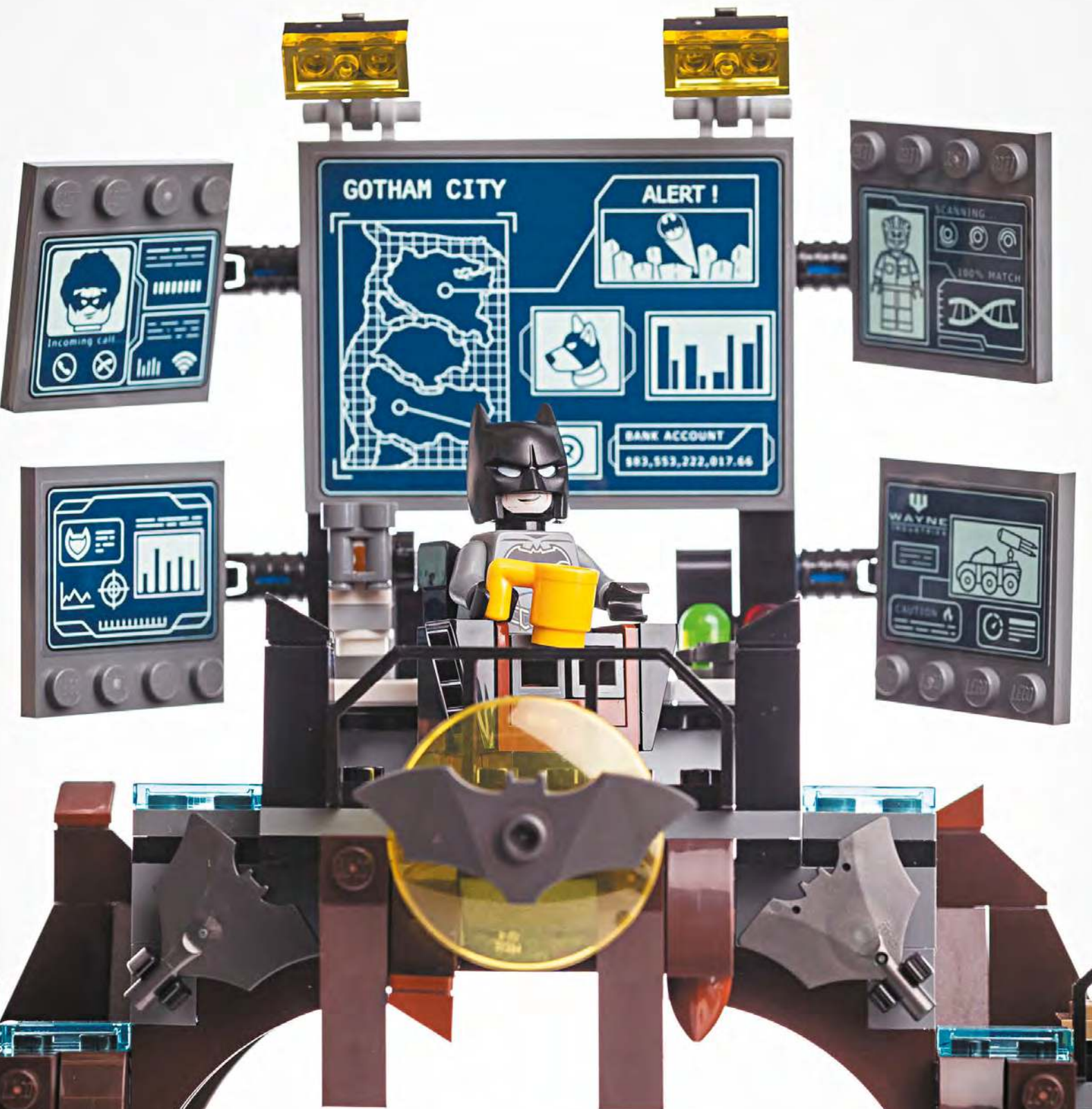
Looking back at the mech, I can't tell you what the thing jutting out of its back is supposed to be, and I definitely just copied the original walker's feet note for note. But at least there's been a vague attempt at making it look anthropomorphic, and the control panel on a ball joint makes the whole thing feel pretty ramshackle, so you know what, I'm going to take this one.

The speeder is a little (well, a lot) harder to justify. It looks like that flap on the back is supposed to indicate a seat for another minifigure, but unless these enemies of war decide to suddenly buddy up, it's as useless as the single lever to control it (because speeders famously don't require handlebars in the Star Wars universe).

The speeder at least packs in a pair of stud shooters, which wasn't too tricky considering this set contains approximately one million of them, and I managed to keep the wedge plates in front out of the line of fire. I don't really remember how, though, because it was all a bit of a blur. 15 minutes is not a lot of time. ■



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